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"Plenty How-Do"
from Africa

LETTERS AND STORIES FROM
THE LIBERIAN BUSH

By
BROTHER EDWARD, O.H.C.

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Foreword

THESE LETTERS from the Holy Cross Liberian Mission were not originally intended for publication. Some of them appeared in the booklet "*A Brother at Bolahun.*"

The title of the present book is a colloquial pidgen English greeting used generally along the West coast of Africa.

The Mission is located in West Africa, eight degrees north of the equator. It is in the remote hinterland of the Republic of Liberia, which is governed entirely by the black people. Liberia was founded more than a hundred years ago by a group of free Negroes sent out from this country by the American Colonization Society. Its capital and chief port is Monrovia; but all along the coast there are towns and counties inhabited by the descendants of the early settlers. In the hinterland the people are all aborigines.

If these letters provide as much pleasure and profit to the reader as they did to the writer in gathering the material, they will not have been written in vain.

B. E.

BOLAHUN, LIBERIA,
WEST AFRICA.

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"Plenty How-do" from Africa

— 1 —

WHEN we awoke Saturday morning, we were in Africa. My first view of Freetown was through the port-hole. I was agreeably surprised to see the mountains, with the town nestling at their feet. I shaved and went on deck and was further pleased to feel the delightful breeze blowing; such a contrast from the intense heat of yesterday!

I was sent for to go to the smoking room to meet the immigration inspector in order to have my passport verified. He was a Sierra Leonian. He looked at my passport and said, "Where are you going?" I replied, "Liberia." "Well, what part of Liberia?" Said I, "I don't know." Then he asked, "Do you mean to say you don't know where you are going? Surely your officers wouldn't have sent you out here without telling you what place you were going to?" I replied, "Well, they did." My mind seemed a blank and I stood there helpless for a minute, when like a flash the name "Bolahun" came to my mind, and I said, "Bolahun." The officer stamped my passport and handed it to me with a look of scorn. I felt chastened.

After breakfast I said my good-byes and came to shore in a motor launch, and was glad to get on land again. The only trouble I had with Customs was due to a pair of

binoculars which I was taking back to the Mission. But after paying a shilling this was straightened out.

A native from the City Hotel had my baggage carried there, and I offered him a "dash" of sixpence, but he said that was not enough, so I gave him sixpence more. I enquired at the desk whether a letter had been received telling of my arrival. They had seen nothing of it, and no boy from the Mission was in sight, so you can imagine how I felt at the prospect of going into the Bush alone. I went over to see Mr. Ward who keeps the Church Missionary Society Bookshop and then went to get my concession form, which entitles missionaries to reduced rates on the train, at the railroad office. There I was greatly relieved to find that a letter had been received; then I knew the other letters must have arrived.

I came back to the hotel and boys besieged me with offers to see me to the Mission, but luckily I engaged none for I found my guide waiting for me. He came to me while I was having dinner, and I was certainly glad to see him. His name was Timothy Sao. I asked him if he had a letter from the Mission and he said he did, so I told him to bring it to me. He brought a big box and a large canvas bag on to the porch; placed them at my feet without saying a word, and gave me the letter. Timothy and I took a walk through the town. I wish I had the "pen of a ready writer" to describe all I saw. Talk about Fairyland! You never saw so many costumes in your life; all colors of the rainbow, and varying from a gee-string to an overcoat. Many bald-headed vultures are flying about which are quite tame. In alighting one could not imagine anything more ungraceful, as they flop down like empty sack-bags.

These birds are good scavengers and are protected by law.

A slight thunder-storm has just come on and it is raining. A beautiful rainbow is shining, and a delightfully cool breeze blowing. The white people I have met seem to live from one furlough to another. As soon as they arrive they begin counting the time before another begins. Speaking of course from my ignorance, I can't see why it should be so difficult to live here, and they say it is even cooler in the interior. I hope to be at the Mission by Wednesday in time for tea, and shall be glad.

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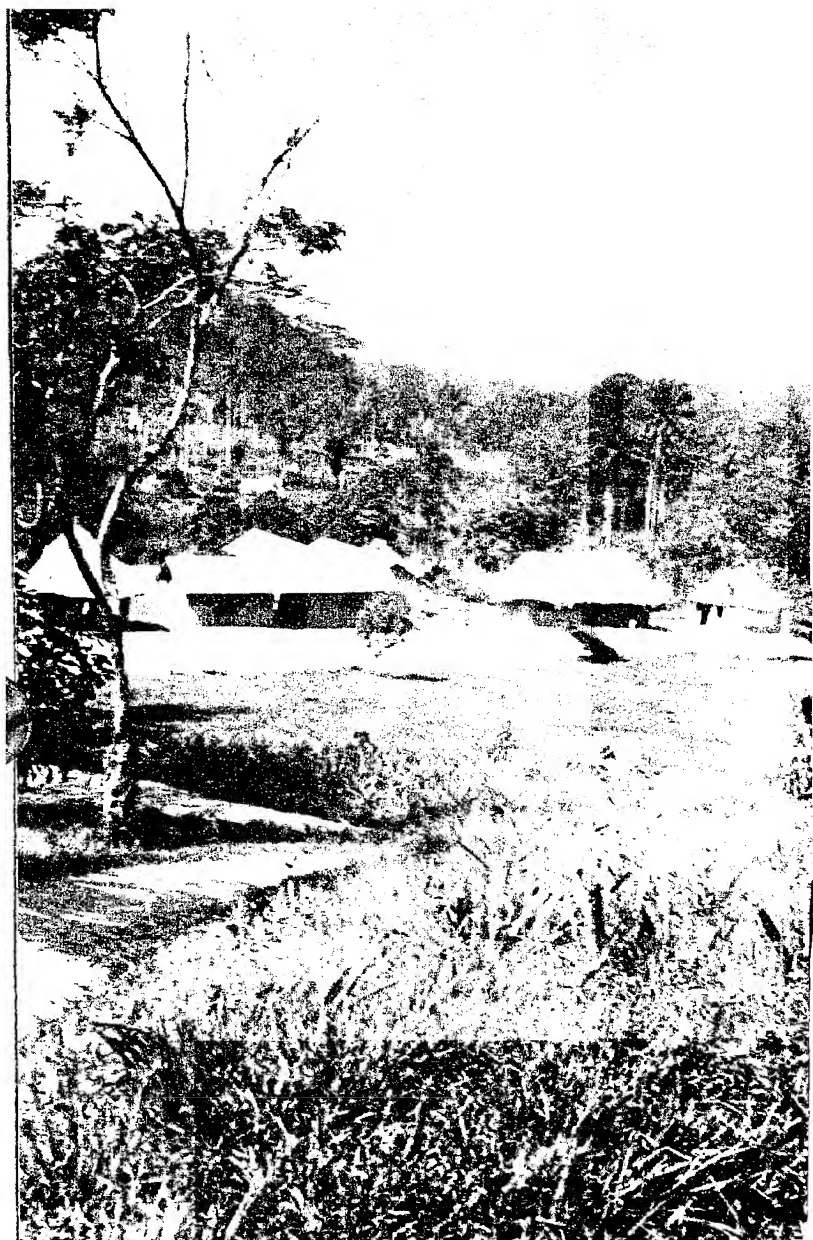
SUNDAY, November 8: went to the Cathedral at 7 and again at 8:30. It is the Church of England Cathedral of St. George. It's a lovely Gothic building. I was surprised to see so many people at the two services. At 8:30 for sung Morning Prayer, the Cathedral was filled. How differently dressed were the people from yesterday when they wore anything from a loincloth to a fur hat. For Church everybody puts on his Sunday best—à la American. The service was sung by choir and congregation. There was a very large choir of men and boys. I think the congregation sang better than the choir!

In the afternoon, my boy and I wandered all over the place; and we found ourselves going right into the very heart of a native village.

Monday morning we started off good and early—three other boys (to carry the baggage), myself and boy. At the station you never beheld anything like it. It seemed to be bedlam let loose! Well, I was fortunate in having a Mr. More from the C.M.S., who kindly saw me settled on the train with all the baggage around me. The train pulled out exactly on time. The local newspaper reporter was at the train to take note of all the celebrities traveling and of course he regarded me as one, so I suppose I got honorable mention in the society column of the paper.

When it was time for lunch, my boy came in to get it ready. All this waiting on will certainly spoil me! The food was in a box as big as an egg crate; a loaf of bread which





I had to break, six legs of chicken with about a pound and a half of veal, some bananas, eggs and cheese. We ate our fill of the bread and chicken and veal, and I gave the rest away. I certainly did not intend keeping any of the meat to eat tomorrow.

I traveled second class on the train. There were few passengers, so it was quiet. The seats are without cushions, so I simply took out my pajama suit and sat on that. The train arrived in due course and our things were brought to the Rest House. The train does not travel at night, so a rest house is provided by the railroad for two shillings and sixpence a night. But one has to provide himself with his own bed, etc.

My boy put up my bed with the mosquito netting over it which makes it look like one of those hospital affairs for dying patients. My boy made tea and prepared supper and the bath was made ready. And that bath! I had almost to lie down in it sideways it was so narrow and shaped more like a coffin than anything I have seen. And then we found we had no soap, so tomorrow I shall have to use shaving cream to wash myself.

It's been a lovely warm summer day. Right after we reached Bo a thunderstorm came up and cooled the air and it's delightful.

The Rest House has three large airy rooms with table, chair and chiffonier. A kitchen is attached where the boys prepare the meals and hot water for the bath. The boys also sleep in the kitchen. A sign tells one to lock doors and windows before retiring. This confirmed my previous instructions to be very careful to look after my baggage as many light-fingered people were in the town of Bo. The

two other rooms of the Rest House were occupied by women.

I woke up during the night about a quarter to twelve and there were what looked like gleaming eyes on the mosquito netting—two piercing ones right at the foot of the bed. I thought they must be some species of phosphorescent bug and I tried to touch one above my head but I could feel nothing there. I lay watching them for some time and turned over in bed and the whole border of the netting was covered with this strange light. I heard my companion move in the next room and then I realized what it was—my neighbor had her lamp burning and the light was shining through the holes and the cracks of the partition onto the netting. And the next thing I heard somebody going round the house with a lantern and trying the doors and I naturally thought somebody was trying to break in, but nothing happened. After that I had "a quiet night and a perfect end." In the morning I found out that the prowlers were the night watchmen.

Next morning, November 10, I had my "trekking" breakfast—a real New England one—eggs, a can of baked beans and tea. Right after breakfast I started out to find a Mr. Bennett of the Methodist Mission for whom I had a letter asking for a bed for the night in case I could not get one at the Rest House. My purpose in seeing him now was to get some lunch for the train. It turned out to be one of the pleasantest experiences of my whole journey. I met a native boy and asked him where the Mission was and he obligingly offered to show me the way, which he did.

Arriving at the Mission I saw a man sitting inside

whom I thought to be Mr. Bennett. He rose to greet me and I saw that he had on a gray cassock. He asked me to sit down and I said, "I think I am in the wrong place. This isn't the Methodist Mission, is it?" He said, "No. It's a Roman Catholic Mission, but do sit down." He seemed quite pleased to see me as he saw very few white people, and as he was so friendly I was glad to see him. He introduced himself as Fr. McDonald. We had a nice chat and I told him that I had set out to see Mr. Bennett to ask him for a couple of sandwiches for my lunch on the train. "Oh," he said, "I shall be glad to give you lunch." So he had his boy put lunch up for me and he asked if I should like a couple of bottles of beer to drink on the train. I said no, that I did not like the taste of beer. He then said, "How about some ginger ale or soda?" I said, "O.K." So he wrote out an order for it and on the way back I met the boys with four bottles of soda and two extra loaves of bread. He also gave the boy an order for a can of cigarettes. I went in to see the chapel which was the usual Roman Mission style and was divided in half, the back being used as a school room.

Fr. McDonald was quite a young fellow—a Holy Ghost Father. He had not met any of our men but he said he would be glad to have them stay with him for a bed and food any time they were passing through Bo. I asked him if the Mission owned the land and he said that the land is not sold in Sierra Leone, but the government allows a fifty-year lease which they had. It used to be the custom to lease for ninety-nine years but that has been done away with. He usually has a companion to work with him but he was away having his appendix attended to. I asked him

if he met many white people. He said, "No, as it is too hard to break down the English reserve. Each man tends to his own particular work and is not interested in anything else." He walked with me to the end of the compound and wished me Godspeed.

Most of the trip from Bo to Pendembu I was the only passenger in the second class coach and the journey was quiet and uneventful. I am sure that this railroad would get the prize for having the most curves in the road. It winds in and out like a corkscrew.

To the native the third class carriages are full of enthralling interest. Vast numbers of the Negroes travel constantly, and the whole population gives one the impression of being folk of infinite leisure. Three or four carriages in every train will be packed to their capacity with the aborigines, and the sound of music and laughter never ceases. At every stop the whole town turns out to see the tri-weekly train come in, and everybody on the train seems to know everybody on the platform. There are loud and joyous cries of recognition, hand-shakings and snappings of fingers, after the manner of African salutation; shouts of laughter and raillery as the train drew out from every station amid roars of farewell cheers, and cyclonic wavings of multifarious and multi-coloured garments and cloths of every description.

Sandy, my host, met me at the train at Pendembu and arranged to have his boys carry my baggage to his house where I was to stay the night. He is one of the traders from whom we buy some of our supplies. I reached there about 3:30 and my boy put up the bed. We had tea at 4:30. At 9:30 he closed the store. I thought possibly we were not to

get any supper but about a quarter to ten he said to his wife, "I guess we'd better have chop," and at that, supper was brought in and shortly after we went to bed.

The next morning—Wednesday—a lorry came for the boy and me and we started off at 7:45. I was surprised to find such a good road and we seemed to be going at a good speed, but according to the speedometer we did not travel more than 40 per. We stopped at one of the towns and got a bucket of mail (having nothing else in which to put it) for the Mission. We arrived at Buyedu about 9:45 and there met the carriers—fifteen to carry me and the baggage into the bush. Well, after much hand-shaking and "How-Do's" and seeing about some packages to take along with us we finally plunged into the Green Wall of Mystery. It is well named, and if one got lost in it he would have a hard time solving it. The trail is the highway through the eastern part of Sierra Leone and the northeastern part of Liberia.

I started off walking bravely. We passed many natives with all their loads on their heads. We came to a stream and I wondered what was going to happen, when the man in front of me stopped at the edge of the stream and motioned me to get on his back. I did and he started across with my feet dragging in the water, and the fellow behind picked them up. He landed me safely across and I soon got used to riding pickaback. I walked for quite a distance and then called for the chariot-hammock. Well, it's worth coming 6,000 miles to get a ride in that!

The hammock is carried by four men working in relays, so that means eight men are sent to carry it through the bush. A kind of crown is made of palm leaves and put

on the head of each and upon these are placed the handles of the hammock. It has a canopy which well protects one from the sun. I felt like the Maharaja of Persia. When I wanted to get down I simply waved my helmet and jumped out and they tried their best to keep up with me. After going some time like that my boy yelled out, "Brother, you go too fast," so I slowed down. Having been carried two or three times I asked my boy if they thought I was heavy and they said, "A bit heavy but not too much." They well remember carrying Bishop Campbell, telling about the sixteen men which were necessary. All the carriers agreed that I looked like Fr. Whitall, so I don't know which is to be complimented. And the trail! You've never seen anything like it—so narrow only one person at a time could pass through, crooked, up hill and down dale, wading through streams, across little bridges made of bamboo. And pervading all was the dank, hot atmosphere.

When we reached a bridge or a very steep place my guide in front would take my hand and lead me. At one place we came to a very steep hill and the man behind put his hand on my hinderparts and helped to push me all the way up. It is simply amazing the surefootedness the natives display in carrying a heavy load. My small tin trunk which took two of us to carry down the steps of the monastery was fastened on the back of a carrier and it was difficult for me to keep up with him. One gets quite stiff riding for a long time in a hammock and then the jolting does not add to one's comfort.

We came to the last town but one and I went to call on the chief who greeted me cordially and I spoke to him through an interpreter. He asked me if I should like some

native palm-wine. I said, "Yes," and a gourd was opened and a jug filled. It looked just like soap suds and feeling a little doubtful I lifted it to my lips and bravely drank some. It tasted very much like some of that prohibition sour wine. I thought it best to take another drink and then I said I had had enough as it was my first native wine and it might make me drunk or give me a big head. At that they all roared laughing.

We started off again and passed through the last town. I was feeling glad that I was getting near the end of my long journey. The carriers were also glad and began to quicken their steps and ran some of the way—just like horses when nearing the home stretch. For the natives eat only twice a day—about 10 o'clock and again around six.

I shall not soon forget our passage through Masambolahun where Chief Fofi held his court. The rain had held up a little, and as we passed swiftly through the narrow alleys between the close-set ranks of huts, every doorway was crowded with faces, shining in the sharp circle of my flash, smiling their admiration as the caravan went swiftly by, the men chanting melodiously as they went. There were no salutations or calls to friends, although our boys probably knew every man, woman and child in the town. The passage was much too serious and dignified a business to be colloquialized by any such familiarities, and the people understood this as well as the carriers, and did not spoil the dramatic effect by any unnecessary greetings.

What a joy it was to see a member of the staff who had come on ahead to meet me! My first sight of him was on the white horse belonging to the Mission. One of the boys

went up to the horse to pat him and the horse shied and everybody jumped, including myself. Having just gotten out of the hammock I was quite stiff from the jolting and I could not stop myself and went backwards for quite a way into the bush—much to the delight of the boys.

It was only a short distance to the village. The chapel bell began to ring. When we came to the stream bordering the town the whole crowd of boys and girls ran like mad to meet me—all anxious to shake hands. They fairly swarmed around me. Soon Fr. Baldwin came running to greet me and on the bank of the stream we met the Sisters and I was escorted with great pomp into the Chapel for a short Thanksgiving service. The Chapel was filled. We sang a hymn and said prayers and Fr. Baldwin gave me the blessing. It was indeed a royal welcome and one I shall never forget. I felt full up and unworthy of it all and prayed fervently that I should love them all and never disappoint any. A crowd of the children clinging to my hands, girdle, and habit escorted me along the well-made road to the monastery enclosure.

The monastery is situated on a hill overlooking the town and is the best possible location. The monastery itself I liked immediately. Tea was ready when we arrived and was served in the "loggia." My bath came next. For ceremony and originality it beats anything I have seen. The "bathroom" is on a section of the porch. When one wants a bath he pulls a wire attached to a bell in the kitchen and yells out: "Ndo ngor linga nja bandi to ngi wanwunja:" "I want some hot water to take a bath." The water is heated in the kitchen—which is a hut about 40 feet from the monastery—and brought by the boy and put

into the hanging bucket-like tank. Well, one just stands under it and pulls the string and you have a shower bath.

As to the heat, it takes me all my time to keep warm! The first night I tried one blanket and felt cold half the night. The second night I tried two and that was not sufficient. It begins to get warm about ten A.M. and stays so until about four. At other times it is delightfully cool. At no time have I felt the heat uncomfortable. It is supposed to be the beginning of the dry season but there has been a shower of rain every day since I arrived in Africa.

The food also has been very good. We have had egg omelet for breakfasts. For lunch yesterday—Friday—fish, cocoa, bread and butter and cheese. The menu for lunch today beats anything I have ever had. The *pièce de résistance* was peanuts, with a side dish of cheese and one banana. Dinner in the evening is the heaviest meal of the day. The first night we had chicken, green native spinach, and potatoes—apple pie. The next night canned tongue, cheese and native pineapple and oranges—a big dish—simply delicious. For supper Friday night—macaroni and oysters, corn-starch pudding.

The unfailing presence of a large bottle of quinine, or aterbrin, the German prophylactic on the table in the refectory, reminds one that in Africa he must maintain a state of health-consciousness. As we sit down to our evening meal daily, everyone swallows down a slug of the stuff. This is done without regard to one's condition, whether he is sick or well. It is not only for a cure, but for a preventive, of malaria. I am told that in the old days when men thought less of the evil taste of a drug than we do in this comfort-seeking age, at every station manned by

white men in these parts, there was a large bowl of quinine powder in the middle of the table, and each one, as he came in, reached across with a spoon, and helped himself to a modicum of the bitter drug.

I have been keeping my eyes peeled for wild animals such as tigers, elephants, etc., but as yet have been "disappointed." Yesterday we met a long green snake coming toward the monastery to make a morning call. We quickly headed it off and killed it. I have yet to see or feel a mosquito. At night one takes care to erect a tent of mosquito netting and then crawl onto the bed and "lock" himself in. I was one of the fortunate ones in America who was not bothered by them so possibly I shall be spared much attention in Africa. The sun (for which a helmet is worn) and the mosquito are the constant enemies of the white man here.

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SUNDAY, DEC. 13, I took seven of the school boys and one of the teachers for a hike. We passed through a town and I went to call on the chief at his house; I sat on his porch to wait for him. He came in and we said "Plenty how-do" and many compliments. I asked him how many people lived in the town. But this was a terrible *faux pas*, as it embarrassed him because he did not know. They do not count the number of people but the number of huts. While we talked through an interpreter, the porch, windows and doors were black with people staring in.

We walked for about an hour and came to another town (the small settlements are called towns no matter whether there are 5 huts or 30) situated on a very high hill from which we could see the surrounding country for miles and also the monastery in the distance.

We waited to speak to the chief on a bench outside the palaver house and after some time one of his councillors came and announced with evident sorrow that the chief was not at home, but that we should have sent word that we were coming. Yet in spite of this neglect on our part the chief would send us a "dash."*

On our way down this very steep hill we met some of the town women just coming from the stream at the foot carrying big round wash pans full of water on their heads. The pans easily held three buckets of water. Meanwhile

* i.e., a gift.

the men of the town were gathered in the Palaver House playing some kind of a native gambling game.

On December second, the school had its closing exercises. It was foggy early in the morning and cloudy later on. The exercises were scheduled to begin at 10 o'clock, but it was really 10:25 before they started. They are one of the big events of the year around here and everybody for miles turns out *en fete*.

The speakers' platform and space for the pupils was under a canopy made of palm leaves and placed at the base of a hill covered with grass. The hill lent itself admirably as seats for the audience.

At last we got under way. We had hardly started when old Chief Fofi and his councillors walked in and took their places. A seat was placed for him and an umbrella opened by one of his men. Ten minutes later drums and stringed instruments and singers were heard coming down the road. It was quite a procession. It stopped just outside the enclosure and one of the big chiefs of the district stepped out of his hammock and Fr. Baldwin had to step off the platform and say "Plenty how-do." Then the chief with all his "court" messengers, "men at arms" and instrument players solemnly took their seats.

A half hour later another commotion was heard and another big chief arrived and of course had to be greeted. All the lesser chiefs felt that etiquette had to be obeyed and they came to greet the big chief. All these entrances stopped the performance. I have never seen anything so picturesque and stately as these arrivals were. It was a deep regret not to have a moving picture camera to take a permanent picture of this gathering of natives. The

people kept arriving until the very end and the hill was literally "black" with them. The usual compliments in various speeches were made.

The boys and girls gave a native play which was very well acted. It was in Bande and of course we did not understand what was being said. The play was about two native boys who had been sent to the coast to school. After school one of the boys returned to his people but the other was too much attracted by the "glamour" of civilization and did not come back until he was "spoiled." The boy who stayed home became the choice of his people, but the other was hated and despised. The play was meant to show the evils of education when not used for the good of the people.

The chairman of the exercises was District Commissioner Reeves. He expressed his appreciation for what had been done for the people by the Mission and pledged his interest and co-operation. We also had the D.C. to dinner in the monastery.

Of course nobody in the town worked that day. A cow was killed and most of the afternoon and evening were spent in dancing. What a strange affair! The instrument players, one stringed instrument and two small drums, furnished the music. Well, the dancers—men, women and children gather in a crowd so close together they touch each other. The music starts up and some sing—it sounds like crooning or groaning. They set up a kind of rhythmic motion and move very slowly for about a "city block" and back again. One of them leaves the ranks and offers a drink of palm wine to onlookers—not of course forgetting the

dancers. Well, they sweat and perspire and the dancing is kept up for hours.

During tea-time that afternoon the houseboy said, "A chief wants to see you in the kitchen." Whenever any of the "big dignitaries" come to call at the monastery they first have to stop at the kitchen and make themselves known to the houseboy who comes to announce their presence. This ensures quiet and peace at the monastery. I went to see the chief and there he was sitting on the kitchen porch. I said "How-do," etc., and he offered his apologies for not being home when we called last Saturday, and he said, "I bring dash small rice." It was a small bag of rice about 8 lbs. After more thank you's and compliments I left.

Nothing delights the natives more than to get any part of white man's clothing; no matter how it is worn so long as it is on and no matter how torn. Shirts are the cheapest and most popular. The shirt tails are worn outside the breeches. Two of the school boys are going for a ten-hour walk in order to buy a shirt for Christmas and they are just as pleased as if they were going on a holiday.

— 4 —

YESTERDAY was the end of the Mohammedan Christmas and the day was given up to celebrating the event by the natives. I went to a town not far from here to see it. Most of the inhabitants are Mohammedans. Can you picture a country road with people going and coming—everybody out for a gala time; native men in their Sunday and festival attire which means a shirt—any colour—and an undershirt or a top shirt, no matter which; the women with bandana kerchiefs and a cloth—in colour the brighter the better—around the waist; young girls just coming into womanhood; nursing mothers, with their offspring tied on their hips; dried up old women. Well, let's go on to the town. We hear the "music" long before we get to it. There is the village on the hill. We climb over some bamboo-sticks, and go up the hill to the mud huts. With their thatched roofs they look just like mushrooms. There is not a sign of green growing; the ground is red clay and as hard as cement. The huts are close together. Now, here come the dancers. They have a couple of drums and a few "bells." There are about eight dances going on at one time. Their idea of dancing is moving in a group all around these huts (I don't mean encircling them) at a fairly good pace. Here comes one of the groups led by a young buck and all the belles running after him. Here is one with older people. They stop to dance for us. Well, they do some antics which beggar description. They do it so solemnly—one does not know whether to laugh or cry. They ask for a

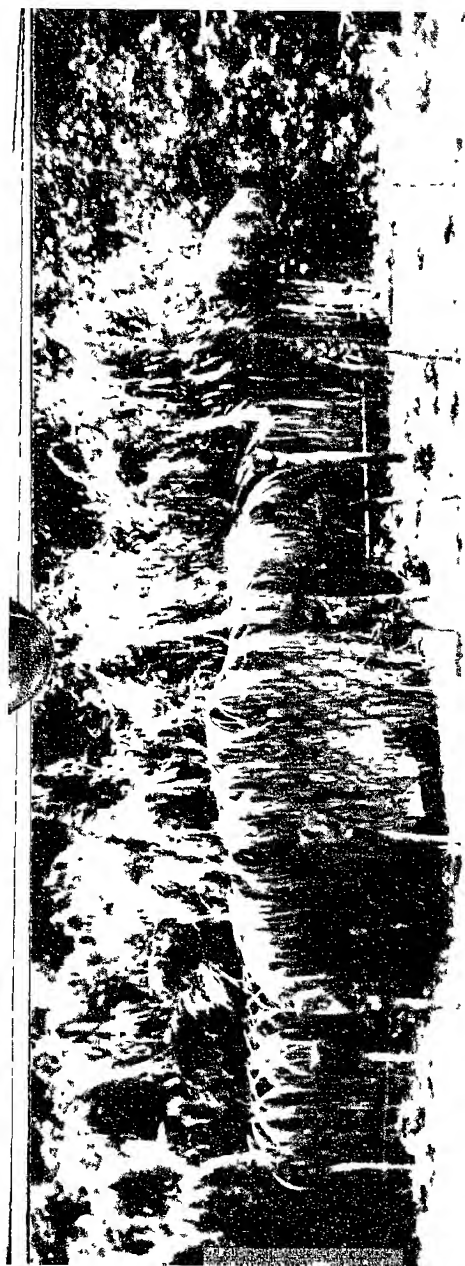
dash. I tell them I haven't anything to give. They quickly move on. Here comes another group. They stop to perform. One of the "special" dancers steps out and does some kind of funny business. The other dancers keep time by their swaying bodies. One dame steps forward and wipes the sweat from the face of the special dancer. They work so hard at it one can't help but feel sorry for them.

Of course they have their "pop corn" and "lemonade" stands. The "shops" are open, the refreshments are displayed; a big dish with a few nuts or seeds put in little piles on it. Yes, actually peanuts!—for sale in an old box outside of a hut.

Last Saturday I took eight of the boys of the school for a hike. We started about 10:30. It was cloudy and threatened rain. I had an umbrella, helmet, trekking clothes on. You just follow a trail that only one at a time can walk. We sent on a couple of the boys to the town where we were going, to tell them we were coming and ask the chief to prepare rice for the eight boys. When we arrived there the "chop"* was not quite ready so the chief took us to the river a little further on. Some of the boys went swimming. My, how they can swim! The river was quite deep and there was a strong current. They told us that crocodiles were frequently seen. Needless to say I did not attempt swimming. The boys of course swim *au naturel*.

We went back to the town to the chief's house and the chop was soon brought. Picture it! A large enamelled wash pan and another smaller one three-quarters filled with steaming rice covered with what looked like curry; also





two smaller basins with water. I stood up to inspect it and told the head boy to get the others to set to and eat it. What strikes one here is the innate politeness of the natives. When the chop was brought they may have noticed it, but not a sign from them that they did so. What a contrast to American boys! The chop was taken inside the chief's hut and put by the open fire in the middle. (These fires!—the smoke is sometimes blinding!) The boys were assigned which pan to sit by, and then they solemnly lifted one of the smaller pans of water and rinsed their right hands with it. Then they slowly dipped their hands into the "mëss" and ate their fill. I went out and sat in the hammock on the porch and ate my lunch. I paid one shilling sixpence, thirty-six cents, for the rice for the boys. We left soon afterwards.

I went on ahead with the leader, and one of the boys called to me, "The people come to carry you." I looked around and there were the belles of the town coming with our boys. I yelled out, "Oh, I don't want to be carried." Then it was explained to me that by carrying me they meant that they were going to accompany us for a short distance. Of course this meant a dash, so I gave them three-pence. At the stream we had to cross they stopped and watched us go on our way.

- 5 -

THIS letter must be entitled, "My First Christmas in the Tropics." Needless to say it was like no other Christmas I have ever spent.

At about four o'clock Christmas Eve, the school children gave a series of pageants to illustrate Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, the Shepherds watching their flocks, the Court of King Herod, and the Nativity. All the people of the town came, and to judge from their interest, the pageant made a profound impression on them.

At our Christmas tea it was delightful to have Bishop Kroll and his wife. They very kindly remembered us with gifts. We also had supper together on the porch. Compline was said at nine, followed by Matins and Lauds, after which we tried to rest until time for the Midnight Mass, but the Christmas festivities had already started in the town and there was an incessant pounding of drums and jingles.

It was a beautiful moonlight night, such as can only be seen in Africa. The church was profusely decorated with palms and other kinds of greens. Candles were placed on the rafters for light. The church was crowded with Christians and would-be Christians, and outside, massed about the door, were the heathen. The Bishop sang the Mass with Fr. Baldwin and Fr. Kroll, Deacon and Sub-deacon. It was a lovely Mass, and though the singing was not what might be called good, yet everybody entered into it.

About nine o'clock Christmas Day, the second cow

was killed. The Mission gave three cows, rice and palm-oil for the festivities. Just where the cow dropped, it was cut up, or rather hacked up, and divided. Can you picture it? Men on their knees hacking the carcass; a crowd of men and schoolboys standing around. Yes, even a devil was there, the first African devil I had seen. How shall I describe it? Can you picture a hoop skirt made of long brown grass; from the shoulders, a cape made of patches of fur; a head which looked like the top of a Ford Model T engine? The cow was handed out to the men in their hands and they carried off their portion dripping with blood.

At 9:30 the bands started. There were at least ten. Each band gathers its own crowd of followers and they travel up and down the "streets" and alleyways of the town, stopping to dance and play at the different houses, especially the important ones where they might get a dash—usually a few irons. These irons are not handed to them; they are thrown on the ground at their feet.

Of course there was a "Big Devil" here for the occasion. His dressing room was one of the boys' dormitories. Well, just picture a haystack with a horse blanket wrapped around it, and for a head the top of a Model T Ford engine which was made into a huge mouth with enormous teeth in it. And just imagine it dancing around and kicking up a cloud of dust. If you can picture a horse sitting down and getting up you will have a good idea of this movement. Well, this carried most of the show.

It seems that anyone who gives a dash to a bevy of village belles can have them follow him and serenade him a long way.

Talk about dancing marathons of America! The dan-

cers here would outdance them anytime. These dancers were going on from 9:30 A.M. until 10:30 P.M., and the last strain of the merry-making came about 11, when we heard the schoolboys singing, "Hark, the herald angels sing."

At 4 o'clock we went down to pay the bands; of course we had to dash—give a present to—them. So each "band" was called and did its little "stunt" before the white Fathers, and Mr. Manley, the head school-master, gave them what he thought they were worth. Of course the Big Devil performed first and was given a dash of eight bunches of irons. Candy was thrown up into the air for the children who scrambled wildly for it.

I could not help but think how impossible it would be for white people to entertain themselves for so long a period with so little. Think of the huge sums of money that are spent at a party for a few hours of entertainment, and it is true to say that the enjoyment is not nearly as great as was had here. All of which goes to show that it is not in the abundance of many things that the most happiness is gained, but in being content and finding enjoyment in the things that one has.

How the boys do enjoy putting on American clothes; trousers a mile too big, no belt, shirts all colours; and the top notch of being dressed up is to get a pair of spectacles. One school boy took a three-day hike in order to buy a shirt. The day before Christmas he came to show it to me. It was a piece of new striped cloth, and the tailor, one of the boys, told him there was not enough to make a shirt. I thought it would be a tragedy not to have the shirt after so much effort, so I saw the tailor and we talked the matter

over. He wanted ten irons and the three pence which the boy had to make the shirt. I haggled him down to five irons, and agreed to furnish buttons, thread and enough cloth to make a collar. I got an old table napkin for the collar and shoulder pieces and the tailor made the shirt. Christmas Day I saw the boy and I said, "Where is your shirt?" Said he, "I loaned it to another boy and he loaned me his white coat." So there you are. I saw the boy at Church and he had his Christmas shirt on.

The Sisters are doing a good work here. At first it was difficult to get the confidence of the people. The idea of educating women was a new thing. But the prejudice is breaking down and there are now about thirty girls in school. The Sisters go out on patrol and preach to the people. Four times a week after supper, a Sister takes a lantern and goes with a boy to a town several miles away, preaches, and comes back about nine o'clock. One of the Sisters had been telling a new class all about God for several weeks, and then she thought she would review. She asked them, "Who is God?" The reply came back, "You." So you see it has its discouraging side.

Yesterday the Sisters invited us all over to the convent for tea. It was a real English one with lots of good things to eat. It was celebrating four events, Christmas, St. Stephen's Day, Bank Holiday, and Bishop Kroll's birthday. "A good time was had by all." A happy ending to the tea party was Benediction in the convent chapel. The weather was unbelievably cool and delightful, a refreshing breeze blowing all day. The thermometer went as low as 58, and as high as 80.

Today and tomorrow the school boys are leaving us and

it will be quite lonesome without them. Some of them have to make a two-days' trek in order to reach their homes. They love to have us visit their villages and are continually asking us to come.

Tomorrow several young Africans, thirsting for knowledge, and especially for English, are gathering together for me to teach them. One is the Town Chief Tufa. He was tickled to know that a class was being started, but he cannot come tomorrow because he has to do the Mission laundry. He proudly produced a primer,—Jevon's Book on Logic, and I hear he is trying to get a law book. So you can see that the African neophyte will need all your prayers.

The other day an armadillo and its young one were caught on a palm-tree. The mother was killed and eaten by the natives. The school boys got hold of the young one. We took it over for the Bishop to see and he was so pleased with it he wanted to take it back to Monrovia with him. The next day we went down to get it, but alas, it had been killed and eaten. Another showed up and the Bishop bought it for sixpence. It was put in the dresser cupboard for the night, but it made so much noise scratching that they had to get up and let it out, expecting of course, not to see it again. But in the morning there it was and it has now become quite a pet.

This morning fourteen of the school boys were confirmed by the Bishop. This, of course, makes fourteen more full-fledged Christians in the church, but it also increases the responsibility of seeing that these members are properly cared for by the administration of the Sacraments. As these boys come from towns many miles away, you will see

that this responsibility will come to mean no small care. It is true that our Lord said, "Go ye into all lands baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost," but He also gave very strong directions to St. Peter to feed His sheep. So as the years go, this part of the vineyard will need an increasing number of workers or we shall have failed to do our part.

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LIFE goes on here in its slow primitive way. I have heard it said that time is the cheapest thing in Africa and I am coming to believe it's true. But for us who have been thinking that we have been accomplishing things it is harassing to watch the waste of time. One cannot hurry in Africa! I am now more accustomed to my surroundings and like it better than I did the first few weeks. I like the natives—they seem so simple and childlike and so appreciative of anything done for them.

The other day a woman was about to give birth to a child. The natives thought she was going to die and they set up a wailing in the town. The Doctor came to help her and got the woman on her feet and started for the hospital. When about half way there she gave birth to her child in the street, picked it up, and returned home.

I did my first "preaching" in the town last week. I went down with an interpreter. He gets a brick and pounds on an iron bar which is hanging up. You wait ten minutes—nothing happens. You pound a little harder; then the "seekers after wisdom" come into the "porch" of a native hut one by one—they are the older men of the town and seem to be able to stand it very well. At last they all seem to be there and we begin. The evangelist, one of the native men who has been licensed by the bishop, does most of the talking—after being primed—in their native language.

The other day I had my first experience in patrol work, i.e., going out to "preach" in the surrounding towns. I

went with Fr. Baldwin. What a job it is to get ready! You take your bed, blankets, sheets, mosquito netting, food, drinking water, etc., and five or six men to carry it. We take off our habits and put on trekking clothes and we are ready to start, but usually much later than the time set.

Well, the trail simply beggars description—up hill and down dale, across creeks and rivers (over which you are carried on a native's back), the path so narrow at times that it would be a physical impossibility to put your two feet together. In many places it is just a rut worn out by the water. If you stepped off the trail on either side, you would be hopelessly lost.

When we get to a town, the natives look upon us as if the circus had come. It is great fun for the children. They feel your hair, use the buckle of your belt for a looking glass, stroke your skin and your nails. We are indeed to them "fearfully and wonderfully made." We are given the use of a native hut while we sojourn in the town. The natives crowd in. I counted five sitting on the bed. They block up the doorway and jostle one another to get a peek. And as if this were not enough, a mother hen with all her chicks came in—she did not intend letting any of her children miss the circus! I yelled out, "Come on in; go and get the rest."

They "dashed us"—gave us as a gift—four eggs and some rice. We thought how nice to have boiled eggs for breakfast. So we had our cook get them ready. I started on mine first and tried to crack one but it would not give way. At last I broke in and there was the nicest little chicken you ever saw. And the others also contained chickens. There are very few people who can have four

boiled chickens for breakfast! Luckily we had cereal.

One of the boys of the town had a terrible looking foot—four of his toes seemed to be smashed and he was running around—of course in his bare feet—covering the wounds with dirt. How he escaped gangrene is a mystery. And there are hundreds of cases like this and no medical help to give them except at the Mission. Fr. Baldwin was going on further to other towns. I was to return home and started off with two carriers who were to carry my bed, etc., back. I had walked for five minutes when the evangelist came running after us. When he got up to us he said, "Fr. Baldwin wants you to carry the boy to the hospital." What he meant was, would I let the boy accompany me? He was about nine years old. I did not know what to do as there was nobody to carry him, but the boy assured us he could walk. We started off, but I couldn't see the kid walking along that rocky road and through cutting grass. So I got him on my back and carried him most of the way. Not being used to it, my knees trembled, my back ached. When we neared the town of Koihemba, where the boy's father was, we met two men and I tried to make them understand that I wanted help to carry the boy, but I guess they thought I was crazy. So on my back he went again.

We got to the town and there was the boy's father sitting on a rock holding a club foot in the sun to heal a sore on his ankle. I tried to get the chief of the town to send a carrier to bring the boy, but nothing doing. I offered to carry the boy the rest of the way, which was not very far, but he could see that I was about all in. He would not let me carry him and walked. When we got to the monastery the poor kid put his arms around me

and held on to me. I was more than paid for my trouble.

We got him to the hospital and he is now getting treatment. We also had a shirt and a little pair of pants made for him out of native cloth. These were the first pants he had ever had. He was so pleased and tickled with them! He is staying here in the town at the Chief's house. He runs to me every time he sees me and holds my hand and walks along with me. He wants to stay here and go to school. We shall have to see if his father is willing and whether he can pay the tuition—which is usually six hampers of rice a year for his food. But anyhow if his father is willing, the rice question will be fixed up. Of course the rice is only to get the parents' co-operation to make them appreciate what is being done.

I had the boy bathed twice but he still looked dusty and dirty, and then I was told that the natives always rub their bodies with palm-oil. So I got some oil which was left in the sanctuary lamp and had him rubbed and he shone like a mahogany table! He asked me the other day for a mouth-organ. I said, "Why don't you ask for a piano?" He said, "Yes, I'll take a piano." We sent the boy back to his town this morning and he soon returned with his father. Treatment has been arranged for him and possibly some work, and while the father cannot furnish the rice for the boy's tuition, the boy assured us that he would do anything to earn it. So I guess we have another boy for the school.

For about six weeks it was rumoured that the President of Liberia was coming to visit this part of the country. That was to be quite an event and gave us something to look forward to. After many false rumours he finally appeared on

the scene. So, hearing the bands one morning, we went to the town to greet him and, after running, just got there in time to see the procession. The town was decked with "triumphal arches" and the natives lined the street. The District Commissioner and some clan chief rode in hammocks—each with its retinue and "bands" following; and then the President with the flag of the Republic carried before him.

Three of us went to the next town—Masambolahun—to see the "decorations." On the way back we met three women with their gourd instruments who had been to serenade the President to the next town. Well, they gave us a demonstration of their "musical ability" and serenaded us right up to the monastery. Of course this meant a dash for them, so we gave them three-pence each. They promised to make us some of these musical instruments but they have not showed up yet.

Several days later we went to pay a visit to the President. We formed quite a caravan—most of the mission staff, the Bishop and Mrs. Kroll and about twenty carriers. The President was most gracious and chatted with us for about an hour. We assured him of our willingness to co-operate with him in working for the good of his people, and he in turn expressed his appreciation of what was being done.

We are now in the dry season and have had no rain for over a month and nature seems to be at a stand still. It is delightfully cool and a fine breeze is blowing most of the time. There is a haze hanging over all, especially on the hills which is caused by the sand blowing from the Sahara Desert. It gets down to 50 degrees in the morning and it feels quite cold. But it warms up in the middle of

the day. The natives suffer a lot from the cold. They huddle over their little fires which burn in the middle of their huts. The only clothing they have is a cloth wrapped around them, or a garment called a domangi—a loose flowing gown which is worn with grace and dignity.

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THIS letter is to be about our school and the driver ants.

The boys here are the same as in any land—full of innocence and charm; eager to learn and find out anything new—and what a vast store of knowledge there is to impart to their primitive minds! They think that the white man with his "great knowledge" (?) is nothing short of a miracle. They love to play football and romp and swim. They keep pets such as a monkey or an armadillo or bush cat and, like all simple folk, are very devout. How our Lord must love them!

The size of the school compound is about two city blocks. There are four dormitories built of mud, with thatched roofs. Each dormitory is divided into two rooms with a passage between and a dirt floor. The only furniture is four or five wooden "beds" about three and one-half feet wide.* On these some dried grass which the boys themselves gather is strewn and over this is placed a reed mat on which the boys sleep, two in a bed. The only covering is a native cloth which each boy has to furnish. There are a dining-room (also used as a class-room), three other class-rooms, a kitchen and a store-room. Around the class-room and dormitories not one blade of grass is allowed to grow for a distance of about twenty feet—this is to keep out the snakes which are very plentiful. The soil is clayey and is dried by the sun until it is almost as hard as cement. A

* The usual native bed is the floor or, at most, a mud divan.

flagpole is on the compound and the Liberian flag is raised and lowered every day at "reveille" and "taps."

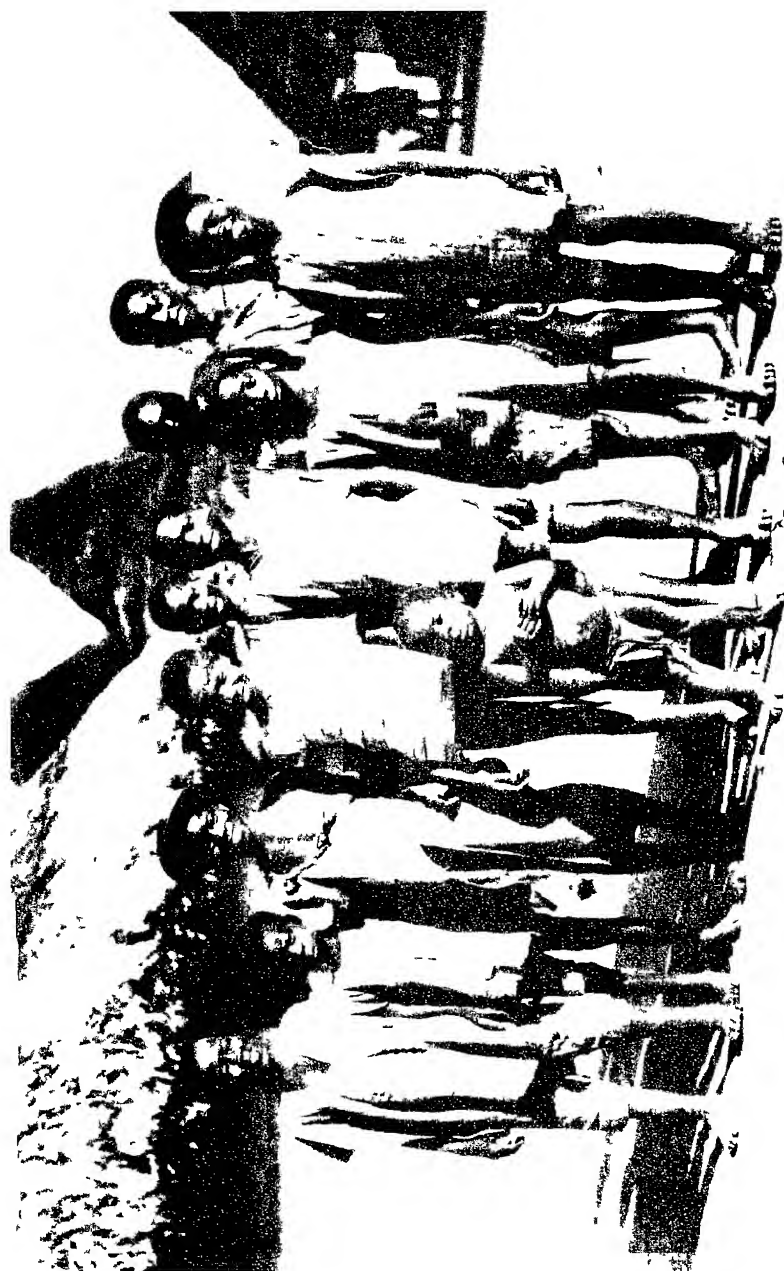
A few days before school began, after Christmas vacation, the boys began to come back—and how happy they were to be here! The "tuition" for a year is six hampers of rice. To us it seems ridiculous but to them a small fortune when the rice is so hard to get and their desire to "study book" so great. Some of the boys come from towns which take two days walking to get here. "Patrick, how far is your town?" "Two days or one day six hours." "What have you been doing during your vacation?" "I brush farm all de time." Yes, that is the men's and boys' work and everybody is busy now getting the ground ready for planting because in a few weeks the rainy season will be here and no planting would mean no food. By "brushing farm" they mean wielding a cutlass to cut the vegetation away. This is burned, and a crudely made mattock simply scrapes the surface of the ground. Is it any wonder the crops are small?

Before leaving for home the boys were told by Mr. Manley, the head school-teacher, not to come back without their rice or they would be sent home again. Some thought they would put this to a test and came without their rice and were sent back. Boys will be boys and Mr. Manley knew the tricks that could be played with rice—that they might sell it and come and tell a "hard luck" story about not being able to get it. Those who were sent home have been straggling in all the week. Their rice is tied up in a big banana leaf and carried on their back unless their father sends a carrier to bring it for them. The rice is weighed and put into a large bin with the rest. Rice is the

chief article of food and is used to feed the boys while here. The money for buildings, supplies, and teachers' salaries must come from friends of the Mission across the sea.

A policeman's whistle is blown at 6 every morning and the boys get up and go down to the stream to bathe. They then line up for Mass at seven and march two by two to the church wrapped in their native cloth, worn toga fashion for the most part and some tie the two ends in a knot around their neck. The smaller boys do not even wear a gee-string under their cloth. The cloth is only worn in the morning and evening when it is cool. In the day time they wear a gee-string and a shirt or a pair of shorts and a shirt to match, made of native cloth, blue and white in colour. According to the usual native custom they have no breakfast. At 8:30 there is "God-Palaver"; from 9 to 11 school, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday; Thursday, 9 to 10:30. They stop school early on Thursday in order to wash their clothes in the stream close by. "Chop"—dinner (or breakfast, as you will)—at 12. School again in the afternoon from 1:30 to 3. Work from 3 to 5 and usually another bath. "Chop"—supper—at 6. The rice is cooked in a big cauldron and brought outside onto the ground where it is dished out into enamel soup-plates—one for each two, who take it and sit on the ground and eat it with their hands. Sometimes one of the boys has been far-seeing and cooked a little "soup," i.e., gravy—usually a few greens mashed up and boiled—and trades it for a little rice because rice is very dry without any soup.

I love to go into the dormitories about 5:30 and see the boys. A fire is burning in the middle and a little iron





pot is on the fire and they cook their soup to put on the rice. From 7 to 8 P.M., study period; all studying together in the assembly building. At 8—prayers in one of the classrooms and then they find their way back to their dormitories in the dark, unless the moon is shining, when they have a glorious time playing for a while longer in the moonlight. In the dormitories the only light is from the glowing embers of the dying fire which is in the middle of the floor. The smoke goes up into the thatch roof which helps to keep bugs away. Then these dark sons of Africa lay aside their shirts and gee-strings and get a well earned rest.

Each boy is assigned some special job. All the boys have work to do on the school farms. Friday is spent in work. The floors of the class-rooms have to be rubbed, i.e., smeared with mud every week to keep out the jiggers. These are a kind of sandflea which were brought from South America to Africa and have now spread all over the continent. The female bores into the tenderest part of the toe, preferably under the nail, and lays her eggs. In a couple of days the toe begins to itch and you call one of the school boys who gets a sharp pointed stick and gradually works it out without breaking the sack. If left in or if any dirt gets in, gangrene is liable to result. I have seen some terrible looking feet as a result of these jiggers. I have already had three, two under the nail and one on the sole of my foot, and the skin is now peeling off.

As the natives wear no shoes, this jigger extracting is a regular "indoor sport" and they become quite adept at it. On Saturday the boys are given a few irons for their work and they go to market and lay in a few "choice dainties"—

a little palm-oil, a little honey, peanuts or a few greens to make soup for their rice.

Seven native teachers and two white persons teach in the school. Subjects taught are the three R's, geography, hygiene and English—the most desired subject. The classes go as high as Standard 6, which class I have because they are far enough advanced in English. A great miracle to them is the art of writing. How they love to write! They have never seen writing before. A card is given to patients in the hospital with their names on and when these are called out later, by another person, their faces simply light up with astonishment. The other day I was trying to explain to the class that the earth is round and one boy asked if anyone had ever gone round it. I told him yes, and I heard another boy verify my statement—that he had even read it in a book so it must be true.

All teaching by white men has to be done through interpreters in the primary school. There are three distinct tribal languages amongst the children: Buzi, Bandi, Kissi. But the boys get along well together. They are like all young people in being quick to learn anything new. Some of them can speak two or three dialects as well as English. And some can "hear" (i.e., understand but not speak) several other dialects.

One day while sitting in one of the class-rooms I saw a long snake go along the floor close to the edge of the wall. We simply chased it out. As it was the first one I had seen I hadn't the heart to kill it.

The driver ant is a most fascinating insect. On their great migrations they march five or six abreast in perfect order. A column here took forty-eight hours to pass. If

their course is over open ground and they have to cross a path, the warriors form up in several rows on either side and with their large jaw form a kind of palisade to protect the procession, in which the ordinary traveler ants are carrying the young ones with them. In forming the palisade the warriors turn their backs to the procession—like the Cossacks used to protect the Czar—and in that position they remain for hours at a time. As a rule there are three or four columns marching abreast of each other, but independently, from five to fifty yards apart. All at once they break up the column and disperse, though how the word of command is given we do not know. Anyhow, in the twinkling of an eye, a huge area is covered with a quivering black mass, and every living thing upon it is doomed. Even the great spiders in the trees cannot escape, for these terrible ravagers creep after them in crowds up to the very highest twigs; and if the spiders, in despair, jump from the trees, they fall victims to the ants on the ground. It is a horrible sight.

A missionary was telling us of the experience he had with these insects. He says that his house lies on one of the main routes of the traveler ants, which swarm mostly during the night. A peculiar scratching and clucking of the fowls gives warning of the danger, and then there is no time to be lost. He jumps out of bed, runs to the fowl house, and opens the door, through which the birds rush out. If they were left shut in they would inevitably be prey of the ants, which creep into their mouths and nostrils until they are suffocated, and then devour them, so that in a short time nothing is left but their white bones. The chickens usually fall victims to the robbers; the fowls can defend themselves till help comes.

Meanwhile a whistle is blown three times, which is the signal for the men to bring buckets of water from the river. The water is mixed with lysol, and the ground all round the house and under it is sprinkled. While they are doing this they are badly treated by the warriors, who creep over them and bite them vigorously; the missionary said he once counted fifty on him. They bite themselves in so firmly with their jaws that one cannot pull them off. If one tries to do so, the body comes away, but the jaws remain in the flesh and have to be taken out separately afterwards. At last the ants move on, leaving thousands of corpses in the puddles, for they cannot stand the smell of lysol.

We had a chimpanzee here in a coop—it was sick and the ants got in and started to eat it. The ants seemed to be about a foot deep around it. We also had some small ducks and the ants got in and killed those. It is said that sometimes when a native has an enemy he wants to get rid of, he ties his hands and feet and places him in the path of these ants, and they literally eat him alive. I am so thankful we have a cement floor in the monastery and this keeps out anything like that—except spiders.

The other day on the refectory table I saw a spider which looked like a small octopus, the spread of its legs would have covered a saucer. The spiders attack and eat the big black cock-roaches which come out from their hiding places at night. There are hundreds of them. I used to amuse myself by smashing them with a book after Compline.



SCHOOL was to be closed for a week beginning Wednesday, but Monday night a tropical windstorm came and took some of the thatch from the roofs of the school buildings and of course they had to be repaired.

Wednesday in Holy Week, Tenebrae was said in the monastery Chapel. Some of the evangelists and school teachers came and read most of the lessons. Thursday, Mass was sung, after which came the Procession to the Altar of Repose. This was in an oratory constructed near the entrance to the chapel. It was made of palm leaves and gaily decorated with flowers. In a vase on the floor was a lovely bouquet with a nice little pineapple right in the center. The Watch was kept very devoutly through the day and night until Mass next morning. One of the boys stayed up all night to wake the watchers. A lovely incident at the Watch was several little girls taking their turn and singing hymns to our Lord. How He must have loved them! Thursday night, Tenebrae in the Chapel. It was all very impressive.

The Passion was preached in the Mission Compound in three different places simultaneously. Fr. Baldwin, with the aid of two interpreters, preached to the Christians in the Church. It was very well attended. Sister Katharine, C.H.N., preached, an evangelist interpreting, in the town palaver house which was crowded; people stood around outside. This was for adult heathen. In the crowd were men, women, and children. A great big special crucifix was made which was hung against a large purple hanging.

All present were most attentive. The heathen children and one man gathered in the hospital Chapel and I told them, with the aid of an older school boy, the Story of the Passion, beginning with the Fall and God's promise to send a Saviour. Some very large and good pictures were used to illustrate the Passion. Hymns were sung in Mendi and prayers said in English and Bandi. At night there was *Tenebrae* in the Monastery Chapel.

Holy Saturday evening: the Blessing of the New Fire and Paschal Candle, followed by First Vespers of Easter, during which the goat (which had been brought by one of the school teachers for the big picnic on Monday) was heard to bleat. We had a hard time getting a goat, so one of the school teachers, Abraham Bala, took an overnight journey to his town to buy one. He arrived during Vespers and tethered it outside the Chapel. Easter Day, Fr. Baldwin sang the Easter Mass and preached. A great crowd was present. Many Communion were made. Sister Katharine held forth in the town palaver house with a preaching service for the heathen, and I had the heathen children and three men hospital patients present in the hospital Chapel.

An unhappy event was the fight which took place in the town between the school boys and the men of the town.

It all came about in this way. Saturday morning said I to myself, "Why not go to the market and see what's new?" It seemed a good idea, so I started out and got one of the older boys to go along. On the road to the market a stream, over which is a plank bridge, marks the boundary line of the Mission compound. In the swamp on the left I spied some lovely lilies which I asked my companion to

get for the garden. The stems broke and he did not get the root, but he brought the lilies. I stood on the road about three feet from the bridge. One of the school girls came along and I gave the flowers to her to take to the Chapel.

On the other side of the bridge I saw one of the hospital dressers, Hugh Samokar, returning from market. I hailed him and he came and stood by me. Just at the moment I saw one of the older boys, Thomas Koli, riding an old bicycle which had been given to the school; following were some of his companions. Thomas ran into Samokar and I thought he was fooling as sometimes one will. There was no brake on the wheel and he passed slowly by for about four feet onto the bridge. When near the center, he suddenly disappeared, just as gracefully as a duck (thinking it over afterwards, I could not help but smile) into the water below, leaving the bicycle on the bridge. The drop was about five feet. We stood speechless for a moment, and then went to see where Thomas was. At that moment he came up the bank wet and bleeding from the mouth, feet and hands, and very much shaken.

I went to Thomas and asked him if he was hurt much and told him to get dry clothes and go to the hospital. He walked over to Samokar and said as calmly as you please, "What did you push me for?" He said he did not push him and I also affirmed it, but Thomas insisted that he did. Whereupon Xerxes Manley, the head teacher's son, sided with Thomas, took off his coat and began to fight. The people coming from the market all scattered like sheep. I sprang in to part them and began to push Xerxes away and told him to go and get his father. He reluctantly began to go but turned back again yelling and shouting.

I then sent Samokar off home and he ran like a small boy.

With a sigh of relief I turned to go on to the market thinking, "thank goodness that's over." I walked leisurely around trying to make sure not to miss anything. This must have taken about twenty minutes.

On my way back I stopped to compliment a native woman sitting by the roadside for having sold out her fresh stock of honey so early in the morning. She seemed not to understand my congratulations but nevertheless I thought she had done well, and met some of her buyers with a very pleased expression on their faces as they beheld their "choice morsel" of dark honey in the comb on a white enamel soup plate. Eaten with rice I am sure it would be a most appetizing dish.

When I was about fifty yards from the bridge I saw that a crowd had gathered at the intersection of the main road and the one leading to the school compound. This was about a hundred yards from the bridge. I picked up the skirt of my habit and ran like mad, just as Samokar was running away from the crowd, the boys yelling out that he had produced a knife, which was a very serious offence. I headed him off but he insisted he was going to the market and he went. Just then Mr. Manley came towards us and I laid the case before him. And so, thinking everything over, I went back to the monastery.

While at dinner we heard a great tumult and shouting going on. As soon as dinner was over I went to the school compound where all was unusually quiet but soon I heard shouting and cries from the town. I headed over there with one of the boys. A great crowd had gathered before Samokar's house and I went up. I stood listening

to the din and clamour for a minute and then thought something ought to be done. The boys were evidently cursing the men and the men the boys. I began pushing the boys away and kept pushing—they yelling at the men over my head. I sent them back to the school compound and was trying to quiet them in order to make a speech when one of the men, Mark Karpu, came from the town. He was one of the leaders of the fray. He yelled out, "Just one question," but I insisted there was to be no question. Then one of the other men came and led him back to town. In the meantime the town chief, Tufa, had gone to get the head school teacher. I met him coming and we talked the situation over and then I took the chief over to the town and asked him to call the people together as I wanted to talk to them. He hammered on the town gong and they gathered. I then stated the two sides of the fuss and it was agreed that we should meet in palaver on Monday to talk things over. As a result of the fray the picnic goat feast has been put off until next week.

Monday evening—"the tumult and the shouting dies, and we are one again with Tyre and Sidon." The boys and men agreed to apologize and peace is restored, and school opens tomorrow. Alleluia! Alleluia!! Alleluia!!!

One night Sister Mary Katharine went to a town to preach. She stayed all night in one of the huts. During the night a horse with a cow bell on its neck put his head into the hut and rang the bell. I think that's a delightful way of being awakened! But think of the effect on one's nerves!

Another night while the Sister was in bed in the same hut, the doors and window frames began to shake violently. She quickly jumped out of bed and looked around,

but could see nothing and all was quiet. She went back to bed and the whole thing began to shake. All through the night the doors and window frames shook like mad. There seemed no explanation for this other than to think it was the work of the devil trying to scare her into not preaching the Gospel.

Some time ago I saw my first albino, a young boy. An albino is a freak of nature. He is born most frequently of black parents, but there are albinos of white parents and also of plants and animals. He does not have the proper pigment in the skin and hair and eyes. There is also an albino woman living near here. The poor woman looks awful, and to behold her brings a feeling of nausea. If it produces such a feeling in us, one wonders what impression a white man makes the first time on the natives. The little children begin to cry and run away the first time they see a white man.

Easter Day while Sister Mary Katharine was preaching in Bolahun, a man was passing by and was attracted by the preaching and stopped to listen. Afterwards he said to Sister, "I am a stranger in these parts and I heard you preaching and I stopped to listen. It impressed me so much that I want to come back and hear more."

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THE transferred "picnic goat feast" was held yesterday, Monday. The morning was overcast, but it cleared up beautifully as the day wore on. It was delightfully cool. Fr. Baldwin and I went along. We provided ourselves with an egg sandwich and crackers, a couple of oranges and of course, our drinking water. We also took along a camp chair and a hammock and reading material. The trail was the same as I have seen everywhere,—narrow, uphill and down dale.

We passed through "Hospital Village." Its huts are principally made of palm leaves. There are two palaver houses for the two different tribes, used for social gatherings and for the settling of the more serious happenings of life. This village is close to the hospital and has come into being as a place for the sick (who are waiting treatment) and their friends.

As the rainy season has partly begun, we passed through swamps of rich black mud out of which were growing beautiful white lilies, very much like our Easter lilies. Their perfume filled the air and could be scented long before they were seen. What a fruitful theme for meditation! The black foul-smelling mud is like the sin and darkness of the world or a soul. The lily bulb shooting forth its green leaves and the lily itself rising above in all its splendid glory, shedding its radiance and perfume in that dark fever-infected atmosphere, is as a soul when touched by the Hand of Christ.

We climbed a high hill and came to a clearing at the top. From it there was one of the most gorgeous views I have seen in Africa. Below was the deep wide valley filled with the unbelievably thick African vegetation; high hills surrounding it with palm-trees growing on the top like sentinels guarding this place of peace and beauty. Beyond these could be seen the mountains covered with a purple haze.

Everywhere were signs of farming. The trees and vegetation had been hacked and cut down with cutlasses. As the country here is very rolling, the farms have to be built on the sides of hills and mountains. What agonies the "soil erosion experts" would suffer as they beheld all this!

We came to a swamp through which we had to pass. Without any hesitation the boy ahead asked me to get on his back in order that he might carry me. I did so and he started off through the thick mud. We had almost crossed it when he sank up to his knees in the slimy ooze. I quickly jumped off onto a log and then turned to rescue him, as I had visions of the stories one reads of the quicksand slowly dragging one to death. But happily this mud was not of that nature. A roar of laughter went up from the other boys when they saw their companion stuck in the mud. It was a cause of much merriment for the rest of the trail.

After about two hours' hard walking, as we neared the river, we heard the sound of camp activity from those who had preceded us. All of a sudden we came to a clearing on the bank of the river. All around were signs of bustle. Two huge fires were burning, on one of which was a big

cauldron, and on the other a five-gallon kerosene tin—the cauldron to boil the rice and the tin to cook the goat. Some boys carried water; others took hold of the goat to slay it. Three or four boys started to skin it and then they thought it would take too long, so they left the skin on and held the carcass over the fire to burn the hair off. This done, they took it down to the river, washed it, and cut it up into pieces. These were put into the kerosene tin and boiled together with a few greens and plenty of pepper which would simply burn us up.

While this was going on the boys made a clearing and put up the camp chair and hammock and also made a table for us with reeds and sticks.

The river is about forty feet wide, very muddy, shallow and has a strong current. The youngest of the boys went swimming. A few of the older ones also went in. The older boys and men are very self-conscious about exposing their naked body, taking every precaution to cover themselves with their hands. I asked if this was done because of the white man, but was told it is a native custom and done at all times. The African, in spite of his scanty dress, is very modest.

A hammock bridge hung across the river. It was the first I had seen, so of course I had to cross it to try it. This bridge is about twenty feet high, made of vines and native rope. To climb up to it you mount a ladder made of round sticks and step cautiously on the shaking, quivering thing—getting more courageous as you near the middle, thinking, "Well, if it breaks, I'll only get a good ducking." Only one person at a time is supposed to cross. As I went a boy approached me from the other side. I thought of the fable

of the two goats who crossed a narrow bridge at the same time. But the boy quickly lay against the "rail" of the bridge while I passed.

We took along a paper of pins to use as hooks for fishing. I also thought I would be far-seeing and took along a spool of native thread. The boys asked me what I was going to do with it and laughed when I told them. What they do for a fishline is to get a fiber of a certain plant and use that. It is very strong and would easily hold a five-pound fish. But only a few small fish were caught.

What surprises one in passing through swamps and thick, damp vegetation is the absence of mosquitoes. I don't recall seeing, hearing, or feeling one. But I never understood verse 25 of Psalm 104, "and creeping things innumerable," until I came to Africa. No matter where you look you see them. Driver ants cross the trail by the millions. They pass in ranks like soldiers going to battle. Or you suddenly find you are walking on a "convention" of long caterpillar-like creatures, with bright red heads—simply swarms of them.

We ate our lunch while a crowd of boys looked on in amazement at the small amount of food we could subsist on; asking incredulously if that were enough for two persons.

At last the goat feast was ready and a whistle summoned all to come and partake of the bountiful repast. It was 1:30 and as it was the first food they had had that day, they came without hesitation, but stood around patiently waiting for their portion. The rice was put into the enamel soup plates and the goat and the stew on top. The plates were laid on the ground in rows. Fr. Baldwin was asked

to come and say grace. After this each one was given a whole plateful for himself (not as is customary, when two boys share a plate) and they sat down in orderly groups and ate with their hands. It was as satisfying to them as a most sumptuous feast would have been to a gourmand.

Afterwards some of the smaller boys dashed into the river for another splash, but right in the midst the whistle sounded which was the signal for breaking camp and hitting the long, long trail of the lonesome palm-tree.

We arrived home about 4, had tea and a much needed bath and so brought to a close a perfect day.

Just after lunch today we heard the joyful shouting of the school boys. This was due to the setting fire to the brush on the school farm. School has been closed for two weeks and all the boys worked hard cutting down the brush. It was finished last Friday and lay there drying out until today. There was a high wind blowing and the roaring flames rushed up the side of the mountain. The boys all stood around watching for small animals, such as rats or squirrels, fleeing from the flames. But the fire spread too rapidly and over too large an area. The flames had hardly died down when the boys in their bare feet began to walk over the burned section. I held my breath. I wouldn't have dared go on it with my heavy shoes.

I think I can understand now how it is that the Hindu fakirs can walk over red hot coals without being burnt. Their feet are so desensitized by not wearing shoes that they do not feel pain.

I am sure the ruins of a house full of valuables would not have been more thoroughly searched. The boys were after the charred remains of small animals. These are

taken to the school compound and the "fortunate" boys then cook and eat them with their rice.

Last Sunday five women and three men from the hospital joined our heathen children's group in the hospital chapel. After the session the boys and girls went to the hospital to sing to the patients and I said a few words and prayers. They seemed to enjoy it a lot and we hope this will be a weekly event. In the afternoon one of the older school boys and I took the phonograph and played records for about three-quarters of an hour. It was in the vestibule to the men's ward. The women and children came and crowded around and a good time was had by all.





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THE rainy season has begun in earnest and showers come up in a moment. So, fortified with an umbrella, Mr. Heydorn and I set out to go to market. Our whole capital between us was threepence—six cents—which I planned to give to the school boys. Heydorn is a young German fellow who is staying with us at the Mission for some months in order to write a Kissi Grammar which he is hoping to present as his thesis for a Ph.D. He has also done a great deal of work on the Bandi Grammar. These will be of immense help to us in studying the native languages.

No matter how early one gets up, he is sure to see people on the way to market, their produce on their heads. The women have their offspring tied on the back. To offer to buy all the stock before one went to the market would be looked on with suspicion. A man had been in the habit of buying a piece of fruit every Saturday. One Saturday he was expecting guests and he wanted more fruit. So, meeting the fruit vendor on the way to market as was his custom, he offered to buy all she had, but she was highly indignant and said, "Every Saturday I have been picking out the best fruit and selling it to you and now you ask me to sell all. If I sold you all my stock I should have no need to go to market."

Saturday is Market Day at Bolahun. It is the real focal point of time for the native. Everything dates before or after Market Day—the one big event of the week. The "wheels of industry" stop and everybody, man, woman

and child, wends his way thither. Nothing barring sickness would keep them away. It is a time when friend meets friend and enmities are put aside. They deck themselves out in all their "finery" and thoroughly enjoy themselves. The natives get more real enjoyment out of it than people of civilized countries get attending a fair. They never tire of it. It is the same thing every week yet always new.

The length of the week is determined by the number of markets in a section. The name of the market is the name of the day in the week. Thus in the Bandi section where we are, the names of the markets corresponding to the names of the days of the week are: Tenemai, Tenefoloi, Kwaylahun, Lombombai, Ndowomai, Ndowowali, and Sevele. Along the Congo River the word for market is the same as for week. The day is looked upon as a day of rest. No work is allowed except for a walk to the market.

Long before starting we heard the distant rumble of a thousand voices sounding like a cascade of falling water. On the way we met buyers and sellers going to and from market. As we drew nearer the babel of voices sounded like a mighty current of rushing water. But there was no shouting of wares for sale as in a civilized market, no haggling or persuading to buy. They seemed quite indifferent as to whether one bought or not. Everything was done in a most sociable and friendly manner.

The women have to reap the crops, gather the fruit and get the things ready to sell in the market. They carry their little loads:—greens, bananas, oranges, tobacco, peanuts, palm-oil, dried fish (which they have to catch), cotton, soap (made from the burnt remains of the banana leaf), one or two chickens or a duck (which they call a

white man's chicken), small pieces of dried black pig with the hair and mildew on it, honey in the comb with the bees flying all over it. When one buys it he presents an old enamelled soup plate and the honey is dished out with their fingers. If anything needs wrapping you present your own receptacle, or a leaf from the avocado pear or banana tree is provided. It is a joy to give away our tin cans in which most of our food comes. As they have no utensils except a cooking pot, the tin cans are quite a treasure to them. We generally have a waiting list. The boys always seem to have a mother or sister to take them to.

The sellers sit on the ground with their few wares before them. The only covering most of them wear is a loin-cloth. In case of rain they simply sit there and get drenched, or get a banana leaf and hold it over them. If you walk through the market you step right over the "counters."

The market is a large square clearing on the border of the Mission. Everytime I go it puts me in mind of Longfellow's, "The Village Blacksmith," the first line of which is "Under the spreading chestnut tree the village smithy stands." Here it would have to begin, "Under the towering cottonwood tree the Bolahun Market is spread." These cottonwood trees soar into the sky for a hundred and twenty-five feet or more, have an immense girth, and for about twenty feet are strengthened by "buttresses" which look like Gothic architecture. Some towns are completely surrounded by these giants of the forest, forming a regular stockade. The market is enclosed by these enormous trees and thick vegetation, and on going into the enclosure one has a feeling of entering a mosque. To one side is a platform about eight feet high made of bamboo from which all public announcements are made.

As we stood there taking in the scene, a blood-curdling yell burst forth, and then another and another, and two men shot up waving an elephant's tail over the heads of the people. These two are characters; short and stockily built, wearing old woolen skating caps, gee-strings and native shirts open at the sides. These police of the market are appointed by the Clan Chief and are exempt from any government requisitions, such as working on the road or as carriers. On the last market of the month they go around to the people and ask for a dash—a kola-nut, an iron, or a little salt, etc.

A public announcement was to be made and the two police were calling for order. They went through the market yelling and screaming and brandishing the elephant's tail like madmen, making the people sit down and be quiet. They did this for about ten minutes, getting madder and madder, fairly frightening the people into submission. One had visions of the days when the natives were rounded up like cattle and driven into slavery. At last every noise was stopped and the announcer yelled out his news in a voice that could be heard for miles. The news was to remind them of hut-tax gathering time—as though anybody could forget it! (Even here in the Hinterland of Africa taxes are as impossible to escape as death.) And that the men would have to work on the government road tomorrow—failure to do so would mean a fine. And also the chiefs are to attend a meeting in Masambolahun, the town of the Paramount Chief, and bring two mats. Failing this, they would be imprisoned or put into the stocks, which means they would be chained by the foot to a log.

This is the largest market for many miles around and

people come from all over, even from the French border. The Mission has brought this into being because of its employing a small army of workmen who have to be paid, and the market is about the only place to spend money. We counted about a thousand people and many had already come and gone. Mr. Heydorn noticed the many civilized clothes worn by the natives. When he was here three years ago he saw very few. Is this a sign and a good sign of advancing civilization? It is a doubtful progress—as “clothes do not make the man.” What one would rather see is better ways of living and farming. When a native gets a pair of shorts, a sweater, a shirt or a hat he does feel somehow or other a little superior. If he should become the possessor of a thick overcoat, he wears it all the time no matter how hot it is.

Before one buys anything he has to go to the money exchange “counter” and get the equivalent in flat strips of iron, twisted in the center, about fourteen inches long, like blunt arrows; the points must be undamaged and the tails unclipped. This is as good a way as a milled edge to ensure that the currency is undamaged. They are made by the village blacksmith. The price varies; one could speculate in irons. The rate this day was two bunches of twenty each for a shilling. One could buy six oranges, an ounce of salt, or eight bananas for one iron.

The most popular “counter” today was the “meat counter.” It is a very rare thing to have fresh meat in the market. Some Mandingoes had brought half a cow, had borrowed the Mission scales to weigh it, and were cutting or hacking it up on the hide. They dashed a small hunk of meat to one of our boys for bringing the scales. He

brought the meat in his hands to us and asked if we had any use for it. He got the meat.

There is even a "cosmetic counter"; little piles of brown mud on banana leaves. When this mud is wet it becomes white and is smeared over the face and breasts. I asked the old woman in charge what it was for and she "blushingly" pointed to her face which was painted with this white "rouge."

One touch of "modernism" was the corner where the Mandingoes were selling. Hanging on lines were cheap coloured prints (obviously of European make), small boxes of menthol, rubber, lumps of sugar, and a couple of bracelets made of celluloid. I sent a boy to price the bracelets and was told sixpence. I went to look at them and the price immediately rose to one and threepence. The natives think the white man is enormously rich and raise the price accordingly. Every fair-sized town has a special market day and these Mandingoes make a regular circuit of them.

The native lives from market day to market day. One ended, he has nothing to look forward to until the next. He is satisfied with very little.

Fofi, who has long been a friend of the Mission, was recently appointed Paramount Chief over the Bandi section. And it seemed appropriate to make a suitable gift. So a domangi was decided upon. It is a loose flowing garment—in fact, merely a strip of cloth about eight feet long and four feet wide with an opening in the center for the head.

The presentation was yesterday. It was to be a gift from the Mission and the town people of Bolahun. The town chief and the head school teacher went along. Fofi

received us in the "sitting room" of his house, its only furniture being two hammocks. He sat in one hammock and the Fr. Prior in the other. Seats were brought in for the rest of us. Any matter concerning the chief is a town affair. So everybody crowded in. Fofi's "men-at-arms" stood behind him and his people sat around on the floor or crowded the windows and doors. When everybody was in and we had all looked at each other for a little while, it was time to make known the object of our visit. At suitable pauses in the little speech which the Fr. Prior made through an interpreter, acknowledgments were made by the chief and all his people. Our house boy gave the gift to the head school teacher who handed it to the chief's brother (who is the chief of the town), and he handed it to Fofi.

A gift is never handed directly to the person for whom it is intended. The parcel was opened with exclamations of wonder and surprise and pleasure. It was like Joseph's coat of many colours with futuristic designs. Fofi put it on with the help of assistants and stood up so that everyone could see it. He and his people thanked us kindly and courteously. After suitable compliments and waiting a little, the chief sent out for a gift to dash us. It was the inevitable chicken. It means that the native likes you very much and it is the highest respect he can pay you. It symbolizes the exchange of the warm blood of the heart. After more looking at each other and a few desultory remarks, we left, the people all thanking us once more. To them it was not merely a gift for Fofi but a token of esteem for the whole section of the Bandi tribe.

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LAST Monday afternoon I set out on what is known as the Bandi Patrol. There are three separate sections to be visited—Bandi, Kissi and Buzi—each having its own dialect. Each member of the Mission studies a tribal language which is by no means easy to learn as they have no writing. The languages are what are known as tonal, which means that if something is said in a high tone it has an entirely different meaning when spoken in a low tone.

Patrolling is a sort of "episcopal visitation," to look after the Christians or would-be Christians and to spread the Kingdom of God. It has its difficulties because the Mohammedan Religion exercises a strong influence over the native. Mohammedanism offers an easier life, one of its strongest appeals being the tolerance of a plurality of wives. The native mind and life is hedged in on all sides by witchcraft, devils, and good and bad "medicine," or magic.

Most of the preaching is done by native evangelists who have been trained for this work and set apart by the bishop. They are paid a small amount—about two shillings a month. Some of them are real orators and how they like to get up and preach!

What a difference there is between getting ready here and simply packing your overnight bag or putting your sermon in your pocket. For patrol you take your bed, mosquito netting, table, chair, food, books, first aid kit, etc., besides money for dashes. Yet no matter how careful

you are, you always seem to forget something. This time it was a washbowl.

This "caravan" was made up of an evangelist, a laborer, two school boys, myself and a dog.

Monks practice poverty for the freedom from unnecessary belongings, but the native has us beat a mile. When going on an overnight trip or for a month, he simply folds up his cover cloth (which is all his bedclothes), and is ready to start. From necessity he really knows what freedom from possessions means. Having to load down to the "gun-wales" as we do makes one feel, to say the least, just a little self-conscious.

As the rainy season has begun in earnest, I took an umbrella, which was very handy, for a shower came up suddenly, making the hard cement-like trail (trodden down by bare feet for centuries) as slippery as glass. How thankful I was that I had had hobnails put on the soles and heels of my shoes only the week before! On account of the swollen rivers we had to make a long detour.

All African trails are the same, winding and twisting, up steep mountains, down deep valleys, over streams, across hammock bridges, narrow, and hemmed in by the thick vegetation. If a tree falls across the path or the white ants build one of their enormous nests, no attempt is made to move the obstacle. You simply jump over it, or go around it and make a new trail. Hanging on a tree or lying on a large stone, you see a bundle of twigs or a tin can. These are good and bad medicine which the natives have placed there to keep away evil spirits. The medicine is prepared by the medicine man—for a dash, of course—and he tells where to place it for the best effect.

All of a sudden you come to a place of desolation. It looks as though there has been a forest fire with the stumps of trees sticking up so appealingly into the air. These barren spots are African farms. The stumps of trees and fallen logs are never moved and the rice is scattered and the soil scratched over it with a mattock. But soon the seed springs up making a big patch of emerald in sharp contrast to the dark foliage of the enclosing forest.

The men do the hard work of brushing the farm. When the rice is planted a kind of shed is made of palm-thatch and the women and children live in it during the day. Their work is to pick weeds and drive birds. To do this the boys get a sling and stone, and standing on a raised eminence, shoot at them, or play musical instruments and sing. This is strictly the women's and children's work. The men would not think of doing any of it. It always puts me in mind of hop-picking time in England.

Along the trail you suddenly come to a nest of termites or white ants. The nests are built as high as twenty-five feet in some parts of the world but in this part of Africa they are sometimes as much as twelve feet. These ants are the real "cathedral" builders of Africa. Some nests are built like Gothic churches or they put you in mind of a miniature New York Telephone building. They are built of red soil which becomes quite hard and trees and shrubs take root and grow in them. As the family increases, new annexes are added which can be distinguished by the darker coloured soil. These ants seem to make up in architecture what the native lacks.

After walking for about two hours we came to a moun-

tain of bare-faced rock from which we could see the huts of Kpangahimba perched on the top of the next mountain. This point is Kpaka Fasa, the vast shoulder of mountain which commands the magnificent panorama of the whole of this northern region of Liberia. The ascent is fairly gradual through the forest until one gets within some hundreds of feet of the top. There the forest ceases, and one comes out upon a great, bare, rounded dome of granite, worn as smooth as a floor, and so steep that for most travellers it could be best negotiated on hands and knees.

Tradition tells us that Kpaka Fasa—*fasa* is the Bandi word for this kind of mountain formation—is named after a great chief who long ago came from what is now the French country, and founded a town on this eminence. It is one of the finest natural fortresses imaginable—a consideration of importance and value in the old days of continual war and raiding. The story as it is told by the natives is that while migrating with his people to find a new homeland, he saw this vast dome afar off, and marked it for the site of his capital. On reaching the top he perpetrated a pun. "Gbandegoli,—It is hot," he cried; (the word Bandi meaning hot); and his sentiment no one will dispute who has ever been on that high, naked dome under the broiling mid-day tropical sun. Kpaka's town persisted on this site for a long time, and finally deserted, owing to the difficulty experienced in getting water.

Suddenly as though he had dropped out of the sky, Koli, (the boy whom we had brought to the hospital some months ago, who had disappeared and all efforts to locate him had failed) stood beside me, naked as the day he was

born with his shirt in his hand, modestly trying to cover himself. He was so tickled to see me and took possession of me immediately.

In this town we are fortunate to have a native hut reserved for our sole use. In some towns we have built a hut which is known as the "white man's house." After many handshakes and howdoos we are able to rest. As soon as the chief hears of your arrival, he pays you a call and then to show his feeling for you he sends or brings a dash. This was a bowl of uncooked rice with two legs of a chicken. On top was an egg. Remembering my last visit here when I found a whole chicken in a boiled egg, I did not attempt to eat it.

Your bed and table are put up and the boy prepares the meals. The chief has a woman prepare rice for your boys. No matter how old a man is, in Africa he is always called "boy." When the rice was cooked, a man led the way to the white man's hut carrying a glowing ember, as it was dark. A woman followed bearing a large bowl of cooked rice with a banana leaf for covering on top. The bowl is solemnly placed on the floor for inspection, which you make. You thank them for it, and they leave. The boys then take the rice to their hut and eat it with their hands. When the people have come from their farms, bathed and eaten chop, they assemble in the Palaver House and the chief sends word that the people are ready and waiting. Your boy takes the lantern and leads the way.

In the Palaver House a fire is burning and the whole town is sitting on the ground or standing outside. The men have on only their cover-cloth (all the bed clothes) so that after the meeting they can go to their huts (in the

dark unless there is still a light from the glowing embers of the dying fire) and sleep on their hard mat.

You ask what the lesson was about the last time and they vie with each other in telling all about it. They love to get up and make speeches. They train themselves in this almost as soon as they begin to talk because every little palaver is tried in "court" by a man of the town, usually the chief, and they are obliged to get up and speak for themselves. In doing this their absolute composure and dignity is very marked. It is a joy to preach to them, for they sit with an intense and absorbed look on their faces. And no matter how tired they were, they would sit and listen for hours. However, we do not keep them long, and they slip silently out into the dark night and you make your way back to your hut, the boy leading with a lighted lantern.

As soon as day breaks, the people are astir and the pounding of the rice in the mortars for the noonday chop (they have no breakfast) is heard and shortly after the whole town becomes a hive of activity.

There is no privacy in Africa. The natives crowd around the door and look on in wonder and amazement. In this town some one once gave the children a little sugar and every time now they come around holding out their hands and saying *sugai*—the one English word they know. The mothers bring their offspring and ask for *sugai*. A man comes in and sits on the floor or on the bed saying not a word. You look at him and he looks at you, but it is a silence more eloquent than words. It is a time when heart speaks to heart. His visit over, he rises, says "Issa" and passes out, and another takes his place.

It is a little startling as you come to the center of the town, to see a large wooden cross over the grave of a Christian and along side of it the grave of a heathen, at the end of which, to indicate the head, are a number of the flat pieces of iron used for money. When a native dies, his friends bring gifts of irons to his relatives who take about eight of them, bend them into a right angle and stick them into the grave. Rice is boiled and on the third day is put on a banana leaf near the irons. One of the relatives then takes and eats a little and the children make a grand scramble for the rest. No grown person is allowed to eat it. This ceremony is also performed before any of the new crop of rice is eaten. This is known as the sacrifice to the dead. The shadow of the Cross fell on the grave of the heathen, spreading its protecting care and triumphing over fear and evil.

We stayed until after the noon chop, made a ceremonial visit to the chief, gave him a suitable dash—two shillings—and once more hit the long, long, winding trail for our next town.

This was another two and a half hours' walking. On long walks the native provides himself with a kola-nut (in shape like a large chestnut) which he chews. This acts as a stimulant. The kola-nut grows well in West Africa and great quantities are exported. The kola-nut is the basis for Coca-Cola.

The only flowers we saw were a few wild poinsettias, which grow on a vine that spreads itself all over a large tree, making it look like a gaily decorated Christmas Tree. It is the only colour to break the monotony of the green. Elephant grass, so named because of its strength and enor-

mous size—growing to a height of fourteen feet—grows wherever it gets a chance.

We passed through one town where there were a few sheep and goats. Their pens are raised up on sticks in order to protect them from leopards at night.

At last we came in sight of Dambu, our next town. The approach was through a wide road with a fence (an unusual sight) around the farm, and of course the inevitable cottonwood trees which are planted in every town.

This town was the cleanest and most progressive one I have seen. It even boasted of some bamboo seats and a few canna lilies. The chief of this settlement has been to the coast for a couple of years and has some progressive ideas. The people were delighted to see us as no white man had been there for some years. One woman opened her arms as if to embrace me. We were taken to the Palaver House and the natives crowded around to greet us. We arrived unexpectedly, but a hut was soon made ready.

The native huts are round; one door and opposite this a narrow aperture for light, which is usually blocked up; the walls are made of mud with a thatched roof; on top of the walls, horizontal poles are placed which make a place to store rice. The bed is on the right. It is made of hard mud and raised about one and a half feet from the floor; over this is placed a reed mat. A fire is usually burning in the middle of the floor and the smoke goes out under the eaves of the roof.

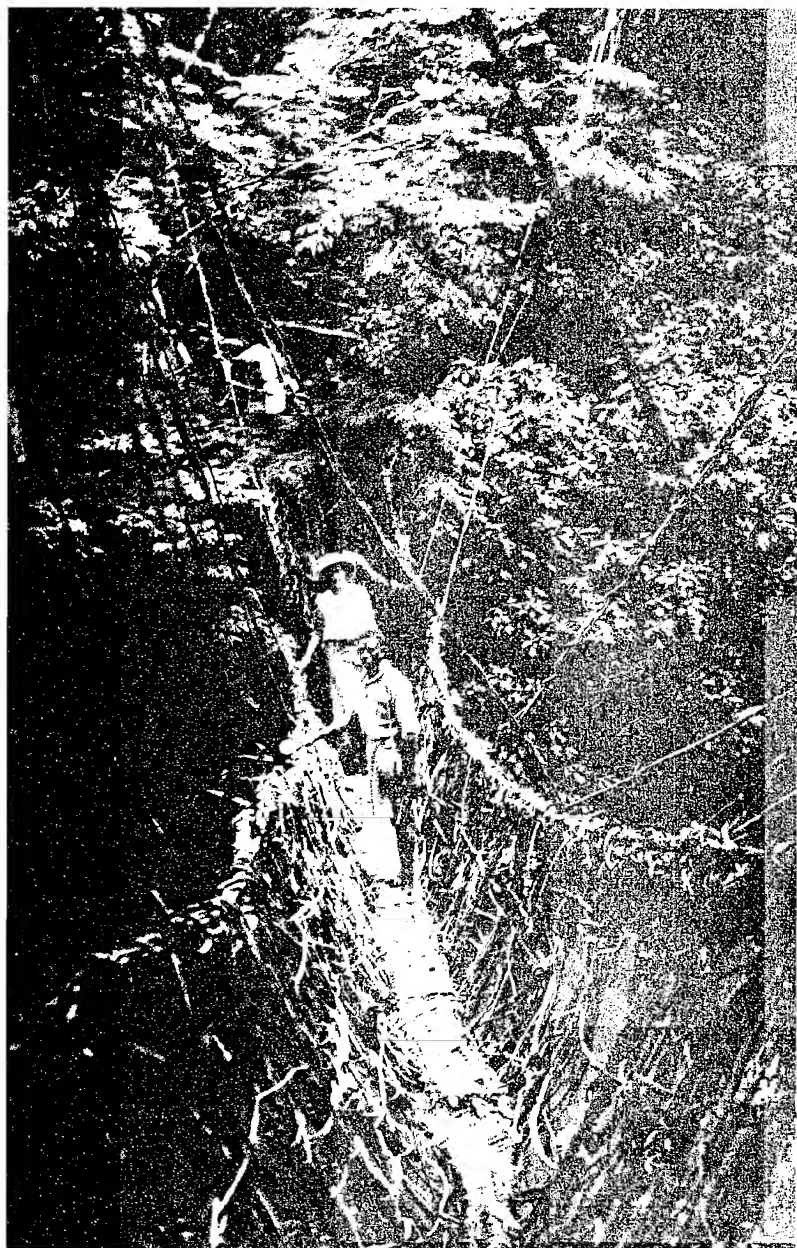
The chief was absent when we arrived but a messenger was dispatched to tell him of our arrival. In his absence the head wife acts for the chief. She came into the hut with two of the head men, she carrying a bowl of rice and one of

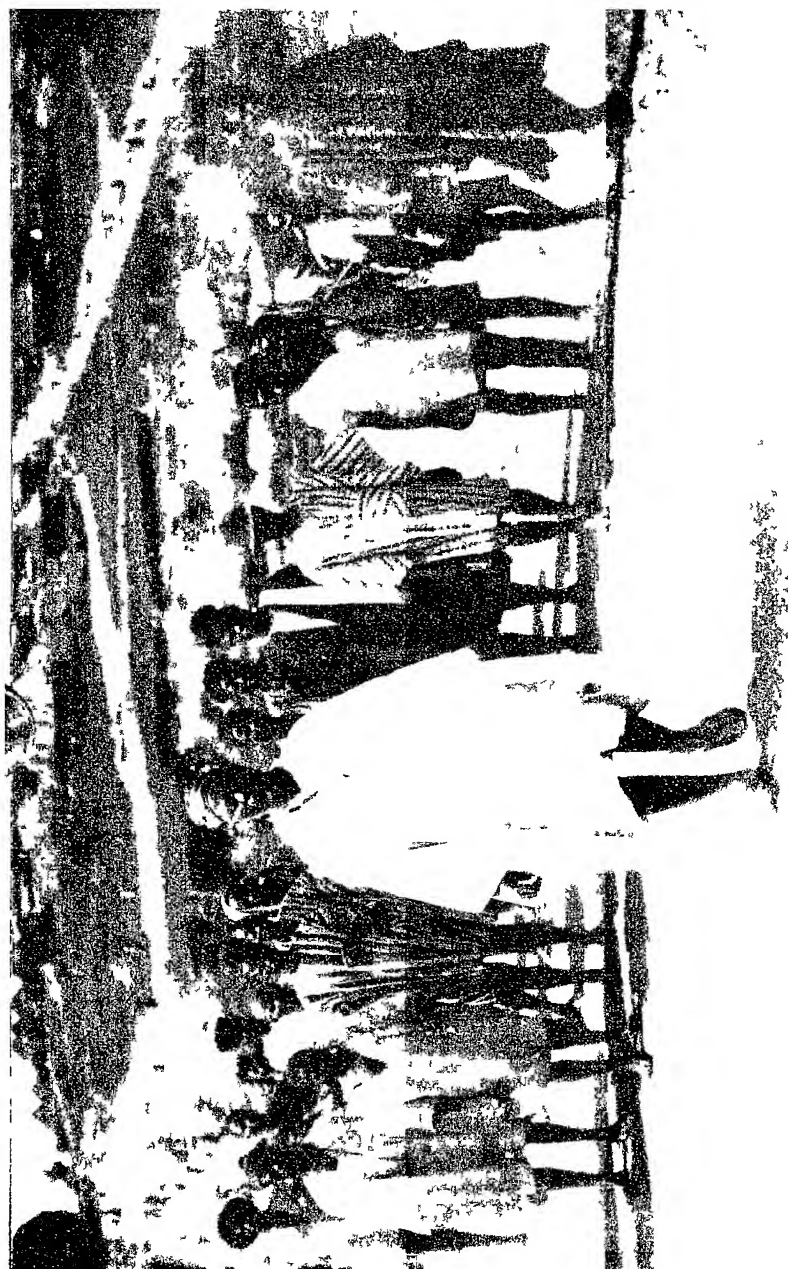
the men a chicken. The rice was put on the floor and they sat on the bed. The doorway was jammed with towns-people. She then offered apologies for the chief's absence and the gifts were presented. We thanked her for the gifts and thought of bringing them back with us but she said, "It is hungry time and we thought you would kill the chicken and eat it here," which we did. The hungry time means that the old rice is getting low and the new rice has not come in yet.

Towards evening our boys ran into the hut and shut the door. I asked what was the matter and they said, "The women are coming from the bush school and bad medicine will be worked on any man who sees them." The men and boys are obliged to stay in until the women are safely in their hut.

When it was quite dark the chief arrived. He expressed his pleasure at seeing us and was very glad to have us come, as he was anxious to have his people enlightened. If we would come regularly, he would build us a fine house. But on account of the distance they would have to come to church, and having no priest to send, it hardly seems wise to go there. But he was distressed that we had not let him know we were coming. It is always the custom when visiting a town to send word ahead, so that the people may not be embarrassed in not being prepared.

The chief would gladly allow us to preach. He assembled his people in the Palaver House. Every town has one of these; it is the village meeting house where everything is talked over. They crowded around, most of them standing all the time. How helpless one feels that he cannot preach to them in their own language!









During the meeting music and wailing were heard. We thought this was in opposition to our preaching, but not so. This music, wailing and dancing lasted all night. It was the end of the girls' bush school and it was to be celebrated in due style. Word had come earlier in the evening that a woman in the neighbouring town (a member of the Bush Society) had died and they had to wail for her, but this was to be short, for the head woman said, "We must not let death interfere with the feast." So all through the night at short intervals they yelled out and then would come an answering echo, and they left their place of meeting and paraded right past our door, singing and playing gourd instruments. It is a most haunting melody and they have the crooners of the radio beat a mile. No man would dream of venturing outside of his hut during these ceremonies. At the first sign of dawn the singing and music stopped. It was the weirdest night I have ever gone through. That was the second night I had not slept at all.

The men also have their Bush Society and likewise celebrate it with due pomp. No woman would dare to be seen at that time. But the men do not come to town for their feast unless it is close by.

The chief took us to see his plantations of pineapple, kola-nuts, and palm trees. The pineapple plantation was a delight to the eye—no stumps or fallen trees and the plants in a straight row. The town also had a blacksmith's shop and a pottery house. Everywhere were signs of progress.

The bath-house is a circular affair, enclosed with poles, forming a kind of stockade. On the ground were large

stones. The women carry the buckets of warm water for the men; the buckets are placed in the center and you stand on the stones and dash the water over you. It is not at all a bad arrangement. The African keeps himself very clean and bathes every day.

We went into the chief's house. A partition divided it in half. On one side was the bedroom which had an iron bed, table and a few dishes. The other section was a sitting-room with a long settee—the only furniture.

A very large house is right next to it where the chief's wives live. On the outside of the house were two long mud platforms about two feet high used as an African "beauty" shop, where the women lie with their heads in one another's laps while getting a permanent wave. This house was opposite ours and we could see the head wife of the chief, with the lesser wives sitting around, being all primped up for her visit to us.

We stayed for the boys' noonday chop and the chief escorted us for a long way before saying a final good-bye. From the main road we took to the trail. He assured us that when we came again he would have a fine clean road made for us. Last week as an extra dash he sent us several yards of country cloth.

We stopped for rest about half way and one of the boys disappeared into the bush but soon came back bringing a bunch of ripe bananas. As we had had no dinner and it was about two o'clock these tasted good.

Climbing a high hill we saw the monastery afar off. It was a welcome sight.

— 12 —

IN 1821 Cape Mesurado, the location of Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, was selected by the American Colonization Society as an appropriate site for the first detachment of American freed negroes, whom difficulties in regard to extending the suffrage in the United States were drawing away from a still slave-holding America. From that date onwards to the present day, negroes and mulattoes, freed slaves or the descendants of such, have been crossing the Atlantic in small numbers to settle on the Liberian coast. The great migration took place during the first half of the nineteenth century. Only two or three thousand American emigrants, at most, have come to Liberia since 1880.

The colony was really founded by Jehuda Ashmun, a white American clergyman, between 1822 and 1828. The name Liberia was invented by the Rev. R. R. Gurley in 1824. On July 26, 1847, the American colonists declared their country to be an independent republic. The native population—apart from the American element—is estimated at as much as 2,000,000. They are divided into tribes: Vai, Bandi, Kpwesi, Kissi, Mende, Buzi, etc. The Mission is located in the Bandi territory and the estimated number of people in the tribe is 35,000. Since Monday, July 26, was Liberian Independence Day, it was meet and right to celebrate it with rejoicing. The natives are very proud of their independence.

It was cloudy and threatened rain in the early morning

but cleared off beautifully as the day advanced. It was announced to the school on the Friday before that a Field Day would be the chief attraction and prizes would be given to the winners of races. So the boys used up a great deal of surplus energy practicing. They worked morning, noon and night.

The tables used for desks and benches were placed in the field. While waiting for things to begin, the boys played an old gramophone with some scratchy records. Some of the dormitories the boys decorated with flowers, and amateur paintings and drawings were displayed on the doors. Considering that these were the very first endeavor in art by these boys, they were remarkably fine, and unless rare talent were displayed by the boys of the same age in civilized countries, these drawings and paintings done by our African boys would easily outclass them. One boy shows real ability in clay modeling and has fashioned small statues of our Lord, the Saints and animals.

There were the "pie"-eating contest, high jumping, broad jumping, handicap races, tug-o-war, and singing and dancing contests. The judges were three teachers and one of the town chiefs. The first race was the "pie"-eating contest. Eight boys took part in this. The "pies" were: peanuts in the shell, corn on the cob—two ears, a banana, and about sixteen inches of sugar cane. Strict watch was kept to see that they did justice to the eating and that none was thrown on the ground. This was lots of fun. Limes were used for the potato race. We had no rope for the tug-o-war so they had to hold hands. It was so difficult to do it that the judges demanded six trials before deciding.

The girls did a "getting-ready-for-market-race," in

which six took part. They had to run a distance of twenty-five feet where all the objects were placed in a heap. They started dressed only in gee-strings, ran to get their lappers or loin cloths, then their head-ties, beads and market produce. Lastly each girl had to tie on her back a baby—which had been borrowed—and come back to the goal.

Of course the Gala Day would be a complete failure without a "band" and dancing. But it seemed for a time as if the day would end in gloom because no band was to be found. The bands had all gone to Kolahun, the seat of the government for this section, with the chiefs of the towns who had strict orders to be there and bring their music and singers and also a cow. As only the chief and his head men went to Kolahun and it was hungry time, the providing of a cow or its equivalent was not met with much favour and those who had to stay in their towns (except at Bolahun) had no celebration. But at last three bands were improvised: two of women with gourd instruments and one of two men with a piece of flat iron bent half round which was tapped with a stick in one hand and ring on the thumb of the other. But this was more than enough, for whenever anything like music vibrates the air, the African's musical soul responds in rhythmical movements of his whole body.

The *pièce de résistance* of the feast was to be a cow. We had worked hard to get one and sent one of our house boys to Kolahun for this purpose. This was Saturday afternoon and he was away all night. Sunday morning we heard a great commotion in town and found out later that it was the return of our house boy who had been indulging in too much palm-wine and, very much the worse for it,

fought with his wife and mother-in-law and then set out to clean up the town. His wife and mother-in-law left him, carrying away all the household effects on their backs. He had to beg them to return to the tune of ten shillings. But the boy brought the cow—a small bull. The bull was tethered to a tree near the town Palaver House. Its feet were tied by four men and it was turned over on its back while another almost severed its head with a knife and a boy held a pail under to catch the blood. The carcass was dragged onto the grass and cut up and placed on banana leaves for distribution. The band played and some sang and danced while this was going on.

Mark Karpu took hold of the gory head of the beast and began dancing with it. At last it was all hacked up and ready for distribution. Mr. Manley supervised this. It was to be shared amongst two hundred people. This called for a work in higher calculus. As I stood there people asked me to intercede for a portion for them. Except the "pie"-eaters none of the boys had anything to eat until the evening. The boys were unanimous in deciding that hereafter two cows should be provided; one for the school and one for the town people. The monastery and convent were fortunate in getting a nice rump steak out of it. The carcass is usually skinned but as this was such a small animal the skin was left on. This was boiled and eaten.

The races lasted until 12 o'clock and then the dancing and singing began. One group of dancers picked up Mr. Manley, the head school teacher, in the town, put him on their shoulders and danced him all the way to his house; then Mr. Manley responded with an exhibition dance all his own. It is a haunting melody they play and it is hard

to restrain oneself from joining in. But self-consciousness is stronger and I have so far resisted, much to the silent disgust of the boys. They can hardly understand why we do not dance. The dancers never stay in one place but move all over the town. Whenever they meet you they stop and the dancers do their stunt. This is a mark of respect and affection and is only done for the "important" people. When I see them dancing and see how hard they work at it—perspiration covering their bodies—I feel sorry for them. But then I suppose they think we are the ones who get no joy out of life.

In the afternoon we went down to the village to give out the prizes. As I was one of the judges for the races I was expected to judge the singing and dancing, but from this I begged off saying that my appreciation of these aesthetic accomplishments was too limited and I could not judge fairly. The prizes were the flat pieces of iron used for barter. After tea we visited the Sisters for a social hour.

We have added another town, Dambu, to our evangelistic circuit and it is my job to visit there every other week. It is a journey of three hours' hard walking. I have tried my best to describe an African trail in previous letters, but I am sure I could not describe it graphically enough. Now that the rainy season is at its height the streams are swollen to overflowing. On one occasion we had no difficulty in crossing a stream on the outward journey but it rained all night and on the way back the carriers had to strip and I climbed on the shoulders of one and was carried over, my feet dragging in the water over my shoetops. After that I did not mind getting wet and walked through water and mud many times and the rain soaked

us. Along the trail we could hear the baboons and gorillas chattering and having a glorious time.

The Palaver House was crowded for the meeting. We began to teach them the Our Father and when we came to the phrase, "Give us this day our daily bread," they all began to laugh. I enquired the cause of this and it was explained that this was the hungry time and they had a hard time to get anything to eat. Whether laughing denoted incredulity or inappropriateness I have not been able to make out. The first time we went there we saw many chickens and a few ducks but evidently these had been eaten.

Just as day breaks the women of this town make the long journey to the Bolahun market with their produce on their heads and return the same day. This means six hours' hard walking. During August and September the rains are so heavy and the trails so impassable that all patrolling is suspended and the evangelists are given an intensive course of training for their work. We are fortunate in having some devout and earnest boys for this and they look upon their training as very important and are always anxious for days of retreat.

The desolate places which were the African farms have now turned into lakes of brilliant green. The grains of rice are coming into the ears and as long as there is daylight it requires an eternal vigilance to drive away the birds. The stalks of rice are plucked separately and tied into small bundles. These are put on the rafters of the huts and fires are built underneath to dry them. The rice is taken down as needed and put into the mortar and pounded with a pestle. Then it is placed on a large flat wicker fan, and thrown into the air. The wind blows the chaff

away. If there is great need and the people in a hurry, the rice in the husk is boiled and put out in the sun to dry. The chief article of food is rice and when this is scarce it causes great hardship. To the native a meal without rice would be no meal. We often try to tell them that there are many more things that can be grown and eaten in Africa, but they look at us in a rather sceptical way. What was good for their fathers is good enough for them, they think.

Recently I presented my first class of candidates for the Cross. These were eleven men of the village of Bolahun. Before receiving the Cross, they were asked if they would forsake charms and divination and partake of no heathen sacrifices. The hearers then lined up outside the church and were presented with a cross about the size of that worn by members of our Order. They are very proud of these crosses and wear them around their necks at all times, even at work. The hearers were then conducted into the church, but they are not baptized for two more years. Or it might be looked upon as a kind of junior profession because they have not yet taken upon them the full yoke of Christ. It is four years all together before an adult heathen is baptized; this seems a long time but experience has shown that it is wise; for many fall away. Catechumens may come into the church and stay until after the Gospel in the Mass.

The dog has taken to coming down to the classroom and staying during the sessions. I thought at first he came down to learn something, but now every time I get up from the seat he jumps on—thinking no doubt that he can do a better job than I.

— 13 —

THE time of plenty has come to the Hinterland of Liberia. It was brought about by the happy solution of many difficult problems by the visit of the President of Liberia last January. Since then people have settled down to contentment and peace, and all with one accord set to work with right good will to making farms. Everywhere are signs of cultivation; swamps, hillsides, plateaus and level places are turned into farms. In fact the ingenuity of the natives was taxed to the uttermost to devise means of getting seed rice. It was weeks overtime before we finally (after scouring the country) got enough for our school farm. And now the driving of birds (the enemies of rice) and the gathering and storing is about complete and the only thing to be done, daily as it is needed, is the pounding of the rice in the mortar. The natives' "granaries"—the vacant spaces between the rafters and the roof—are full to overflowing with new-grown rice, and their "wine vats"—their gourds—are bursting with new palm-wine, and for all this we say, "Blessed be God."

While the boys were gathering rice, I went with them one afternoon to see what it was like. It was some time before I got the knack of it, much to the amusement of the boys. I was provided with a flat stick about three-quarters of an inch wide and four inches long to cut the rice. You cut with your right hand then put the stalks of rice in your left. A blade of grass is on each stalk and this must be held out by the fingers and stripped off in a bunch. The

boys are quite skilful at it and gather a large patch in no time. Incidentally this was a great opportunity to practice Bandi.

The people are happy. We know this to be true because there are fewer palavers. When the African does get into trouble, the matter is taken to "court." After days of endless controversy the offender usually satisfies all parties by binding himself to pay a certain sum of money which puts him in debt for years. For the minor peccadilloes, in order to appease the person offended, one has to "beg him," which usually means to touch his right foot or the ground before him in abject humility. Then the offended touches the right shoulder of the offender, who once more goes on his way rejoicing.

During the three hundred years of their trade monopoly the Portuguese made an indelible impression on the Grain Coast—Liberia—and introduced the orange tree, lime, cocoanut-palm, pineapple, papaw (from which is obtained pepsin, so much used in digestive preparations), chili-pepper, tobacco-plant, the hog, the Muscovy duck; and yet very few of these things are grown and used in any quantities.

Rice would not be very nourishing without the equally essential palm-oil, because rice is not so valuable a food as some other cereals, inasmuch as the percentage of nitrogenous matter is less. There is only seven per cent of gluten in rice as compared with twenty-two per cent in the finest wheat, fourteen in oats and twelve in maize. The percentage of potash is eighteen to twenty-three in wheat. The fatty matter is also less in proportion than in other cereals. Rice, therefore, requires to be combined with

fatty and nitrogenous substances, such as milk or gravy, to satisfy the requirements of the human system. These people seldom have meat and it is palm oil which furnishes the vitamins.

Palm oil is used with rice, and practically everything they eat. It also furnishes light. The oil is put into anything that will hold it and a piece of cotton is placed into the oil for a wick. It is used to grease the skin, which will become dusty and lusterless unless rubbed with oil, and then it gives a lovely, glossy shine. It is also used as medicine. The palm-fronds are used for thatching huts and when a palm-tree is cut down (which is seldom) a kind of palm cabbage is secured from the heart of the tree. This "cabbage" would go well with cornbeef. The palm-tree is so important that it has been chosen as the emblem of Liberia. The oil is red and is extracted from the palm kernels—the seeds. The nut is also eaten.

With the proper amount of "elbow grease," imagination and love of flowers, a very beautiful flower garden can be made. We have experimented with seeds from America and England but few grow. The canna lilies, marigolds, zinnias, dahlias and some native flowers will grow like weeds, however, when cultivated. The only two wild flowers which I have seen are the African daisy (recently displayed in New York at the flower show) and poinsettias. But Africa is a veritable paradise for the most gorgeously coloured butterflies, insects, and humming birds. The latter are no larger than a bee and can be caught with one's hand. They come by the hundreds and fascinate one by their quivering brilliant colours.

It is interesting to get the reaction to such "foolish"

things as flowers. The artistic faculty of the natives has not been developed and to waste time on flowers is to them just one of the many idiosyncrasies of the white man. To them the all essential occupation is getting food. When they tell me this, it always leaves the way open to give a homily on "man shall not live by bread alone." I sometimes suggest to them that we get some flowers and sell them in the market—this always brings out a roar of laughter. Fr. Allen loved flowers. He had his garden here and distributed flowers to the people of the towns, so that we do now see a few cultivated ones. I am trying to do the same thing and the boys especially are quite keen about asking for seeds to take home. The boys have also planted flowers wherever there is a vacant space on the school compound and it is beginning to "blossom as the rose."

The communal spirit is very strong amongst the natives; if it were not so, they could not possibly live in such close contact in the towns as they do. If anyone has anything he must share with the others. This is carried out even in smaller things. For instance, we have a spelling bee every Thursday. Some small edible prize is given to the winner, and while he may treasure most of it for his sister or mother, he promptly gives a portion to his classmates. If anyone sets up by himself and becomes prosperous, he is a marked man and must be on the lookout on all sides for attacks of envy, jealousy and bad "medicine." We have cases of it here. When a man has money or rice all his relatives flock to him to be kept. We make fun of the proverbial mother-in-law coming for a week and staying for life, but here a man is responsible for all of his kin, if he has something and they have not.

One day while I was digging in the garden, a school boy came to me and said, "We are about to form a club for the learning and improvement of English and we have elected you president. Will you accept?" Of course I would. This met the approval of the powers that be and the club was duly formed having as officers: a president, vice-president, critic and secretary. A constitution was drawn up and accepted. It is known as the Aggrey Debating Society.

"Dr. Aggrey was one of the leading negroes of Africa. His father was named Kodwo Kwegyir Aggrey, who was Royal Linguist in the court of King Amonu V of Anambu. He was a great man and won the love and respect of all. There was born to this Linguist a son—James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey—who became one of the greatest interpreters ever known. He went out into three continents—Africa, America, and Europe—giving his life to help people understand one another. Young Aggrey went to Livingstone College, Salisbury, in North Carolina. He at once took a leading place. He lived in America for twenty years. But he felt the call of his own people too strongly to forget them and he came back to Africa and laboured indefatigably. When he died in July, 1927, there was mourning in New York, Salisbury, London and many places in England where Dr. Aggrey was loved. It was said of him that he was the finest interpreter which the present century has produced of the white man to the black, of the black man to the white." So it was meet that Dr. Aggrey should be chosen as our patron.

The African is very dignified and loves ceremonial.

That is one reason why the Mass has a strong hold on the hearts of the people. Our meetings are held in the assembly building around a long table. The boys are very serious and earnest about it and, though the sessions are three nights a week, it is seldom that a boy is absent. It goes without saying that the meetings are opened with prayers and the singing of hymns. This was not at the suggestion of the missionary.

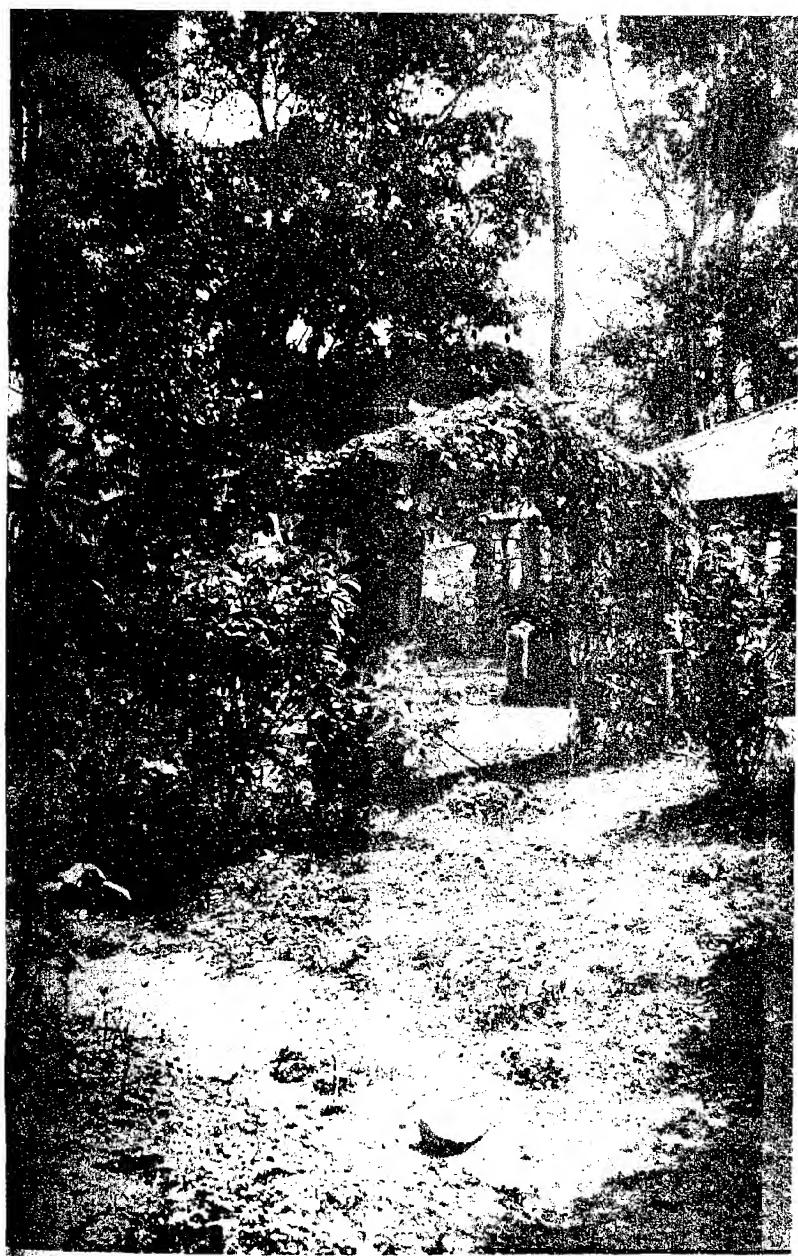
The African Christians are very devout and would not think of beginning any meeting without prayer. It is amusing and yet enviable to hear them get up in their complete self-composure and address the Mr. President, Secretary, etc., and the "whole members." Recently we debated two whole sessions as to whether it is good for club members to come to meetings in their cover cloth, i.e., all the bed clothes. The majority rules and the vote taken showed fifteen in favour and nine against. The argument which seemed to win was that the nights were getting colder and the bed clothes were warmer; a proposition with which I am sure you in America would heartily agree these cold winter nights. Some subjects chosen for debate were: "Is water more important than food?" "Is the dry season better than the wet season?"

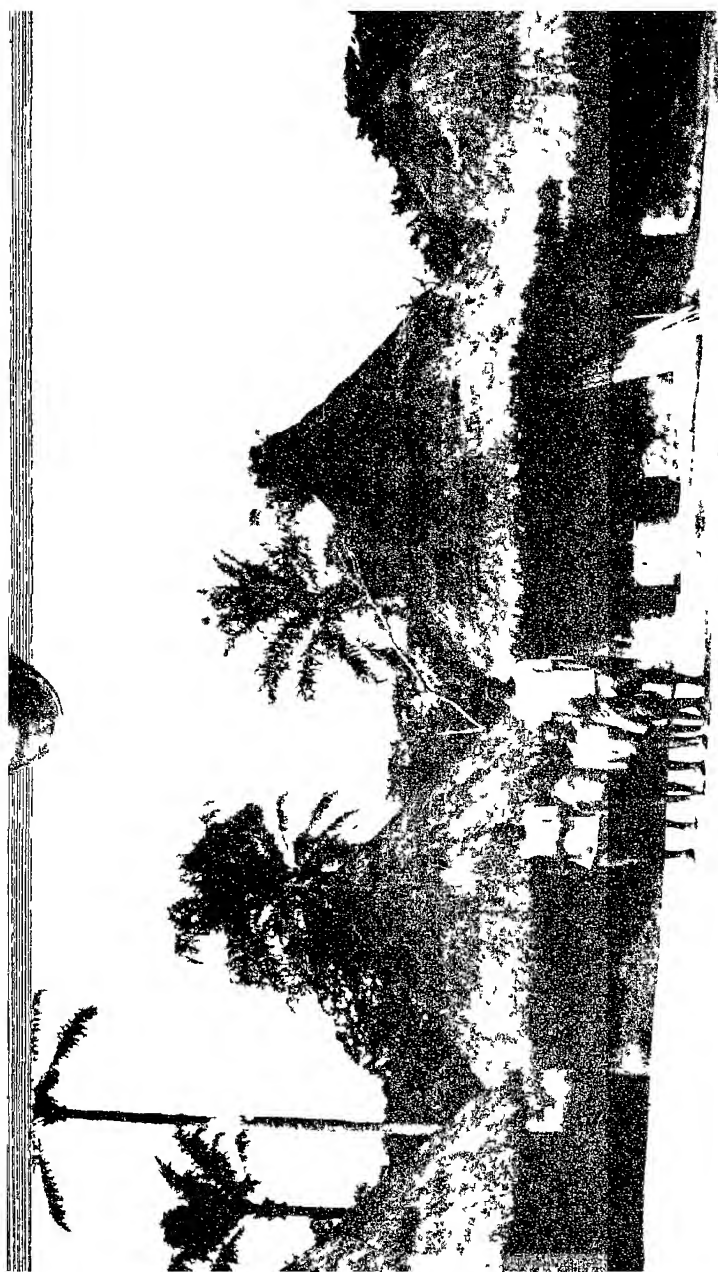
While we were at supper one night three boys from the school came to tell us that a boy was crying with pain in his head. We sent a pill down to him and after supper I went to see him in his sleeping hut. The room was full of boys and the sick one was lying on his bed, literally writhing in agony. It took two or three to hold him. We all felt so helpless. The boy suddenly got up, broke away

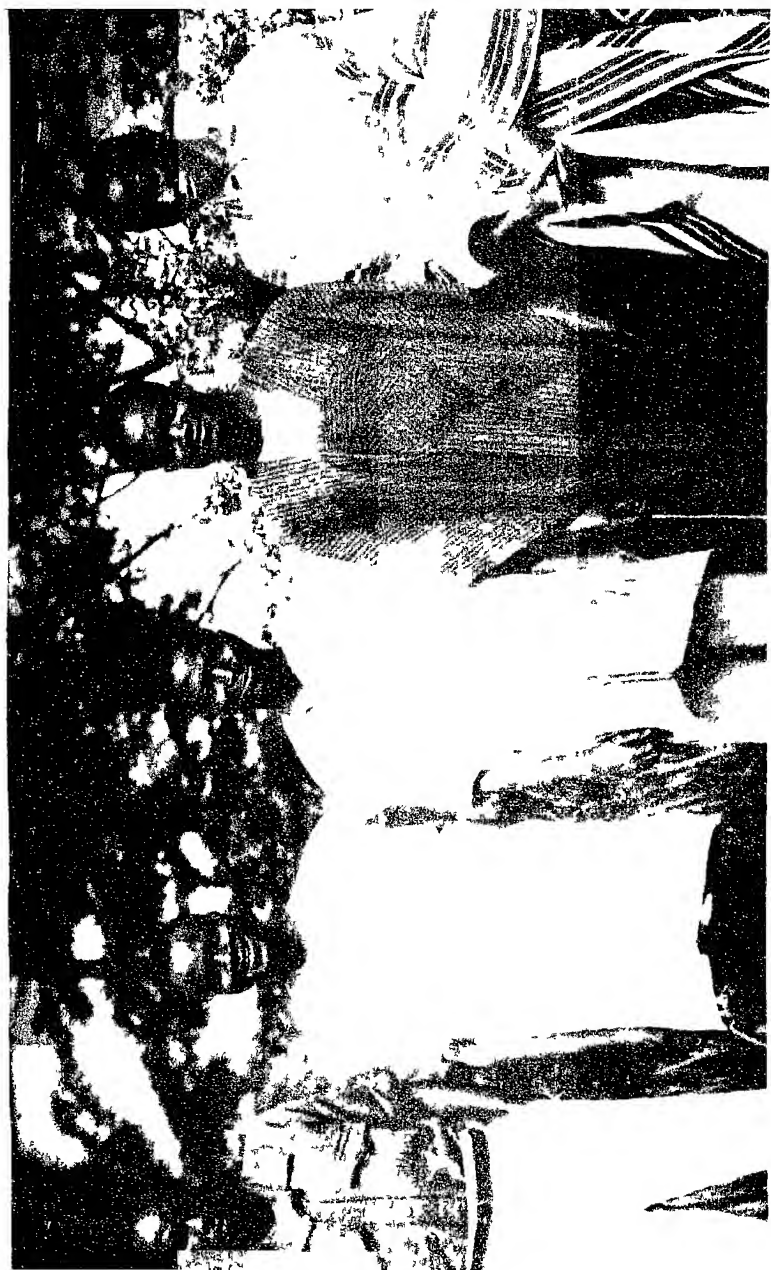
from us and rushed outside, rolling in agony on the ground. The boys picked him up and carried him back to the hut.

A couple of minutes afterwards, a man came in and sat on the bed and said, "I heard him crying and I've brought some native medicine." I looked at it. It was in a small cornucopia made of leaves; inside were some crushed herbs or leaves. I would not allow him to give it to the boy at first, but as we could do nothing, I finally consented. The man put the end of the cornucopia into the corner of each eye and squeezed some of the concoction into it. Immediately the boy became quiet and the pain left. Well, there was nothing more to be said or done—the native medicine had won. The boys told me afterwards that the native people always use it in case of headache. "Well," I said, "in that case you know what herb it is. Use it. The medicine is free and God has given it to you for that purpose." "No," they said, "we cannot use it unless we get it from someone and pay for it. If we do, some greater sickness will come upon us."

One of the Sisters went to a town to preach, staying overnight. She was given a hut which belonged to a man who was away at that time. During the night the man came back and went to his hut. He pushed open the door, which was a very flimsy affair, and saw the bed, the mosquito tent and the Sister in bed. He did not go in but went and asked who was in his hut. When he was told that it was a white Sister, he ran right out of town and did not come back for a couple of days—he was evidently trying to get away from the bad luck it might bring him. On the other hand a native is anxious to see a white person the first







Nome En. n. liere



time, as it will bring him good luck. One woman who heard that a white man was passing ran to look at him and said to someone, "I have always wanted to see a white man before I die."

Monday night the wife of one of our labourers (the one who used to carry my load to Dambu) went to the hut of the chief and said, "Moru is dying. Come quickly. He can't talk." The chief went and saw that Moru was in a bad way. He was taken to the hospital unconscious and there was very little anyone could do for him, as we have no doctor at present. His friends came from the town and took turns watching all night by his bedside. At 4:45 A.M., he seemed to be dying and they went for the Sister who has charge of the hospital, but she, even though so willing, could do nothing; so she immediately baptized him. (He had been a catechumen some years.) At 9 A.M., he was still alive and it was thought best to send him back to Dambu, where his mother lives and his brother is chief of the town. Four men volunteered to carry him in a hammock that long arduous journey which takes three good hours to walk unhampered. This goes to show how badly we need a doctor; the people ask constantly, "When is the doctor coming?" We are counting the days until Dr. Fowler, who has been studying tropical diseases in London, will arrive.

Moru was a splendid fellow and liked by everybody. He was keen to learn English and I had given him some lessons. When we met in the town it was pathetic to see his pleasure as he showed me the paper on which he had worked so hard to form the letters. Once when one of the missionaries was going home on furlough, he found out

after travelling about four hours that he had forgotten his keys, so Moru volunteered to go back for them. This involved not only the eight hours for the journey back to Bolahun and return but an all-night walk to catch up with the further advance of the Father. Word came this morning that Moru died at 8 o'clock last night. We were told that when the mother saw her son in the hammock she was so overcome and distracted that she tried to kill herself with a knife. He was given a heathen and a Christian burial.

We often speak of the difficulties and obstacles to be overcome in learning a new tongue, but there is one universal language which is known and felt in the heart and that is the language of love and loyalty. It is the one means of communication *par excellence*. It is understood by all peoples the world over and overcomes all barriers.

— 14 —

THERE'S "music in the air" in this section in order to celebrate worthily the Mohammedan "Night of Decree" or "of Power" which comes three days before the end of the Ramadan, the month of strict fasting when no food is taken from daylight to dark. The fast is associated with the belief that in this month God sent down the Koran from the seventh Heaven to Gabriel in the lowest, that it might be revealed to Mohammed. On this night intercourse between heaven and earth is peculiarly open and many wonders are supposed to take place.

The Mohammedan Era of the Hegira, used in Turkey, Persia, Arabia, etc., is dated from the first day of the month preceding the flight of Mohammed from Mecca to Medina, i.e., Thursday, the fifteenth of July, 622, and it commenced on the day following. The years of the Hegira are purely lunar, and always consist of twelve lunar months, commencing with the approximate new moon, without any intercalation to keep them in the same season with respect to the sun, so that the months retrograde through all the seasons in about thirty-two and one-half years. This means that Ramadan (in which is their "Christmas" when the Koran was delivered to Mohammed) may come in any of our months.

So, hearing these haunting sounds of drums and dancing, we could not resist the temptation to find out what it was all about, and Dr. Heydorn and I started for Masambolahun for a night of excitement. Each of us gathered

a group of boys from the school. I went into the Bandi hut to get David Dui and found him just ready to get into bed, too sick to move, but the moment the trip to Masambolahun was mentioned he perked up immediately and went with us.

A little while ago the school was presented with two native drums. The town people of Bolahun thought this was playing favourites and said they should have drums also. This was agreed to. (Incidentally this will make our town independent of outside musicians for our own celebrations.) When we went to town, they were being tried out. We stayed for about twenty minutes. Of course a great crowd had collected and some private exhibition dancing was going on. It is amazing how they can jiggle, twist, jump and make all kinds of contortions. Everyone standing around was tingling with the dancing urge. They took their turns one at a time—men, women and boys. The sick boy David had become very lively by now and jumped in when his turn came, dancing like one possessed, evidently shaking off his sickness, and earning a great round of applause. Those who could not get into the circle were having private dancing parties of their own.

When we started for Masambolahun, the musicians and dancers decided to follow us. So off we went; lanterns gleaming, drums rolling and dancers and singers working off surplus energy. It was enough to drive all evil spirits and bad medicine pell-mell into perdition. We arrived at the gates of the "city" and it put one in mind of the trumpeters of Joshua razing the walls of Jericho. However, this was to be a visitation of good will and the natives flocked to welcome us. We advanced with great

pomp into the town, when suddenly a great hush fell upon the crowd—we were standing on sacred ground. The Mohammedan Mosque is in the center of the town—a large open palaver shed. The mosque was full to overflowing, and the faithful had spread their mats on the ground, the men in front and the women behind.

We were escorted to an honourable place where a great crowd had gathered. An entrance was broken through when lo and behold! there sat Sister Mary Katharine, the center of gravitation, as gracefully as a queen on her throne with her courtiers and subjects surrounding her like bees. One might have thought she had apostatized and was waiting her reception into the Mohammedan Faith. What made it the more startling was the fact that we had heard earlier in the evening that she had gone with a great deal of earnestness and enthusiasm to preach in a near-by town! Another "throne" was hastily found, dusted and set up, which Dr. Heydorn and I occupied. All we lacked were the pages waving long fans to keep us cool.

We had a fine view of the Mohammedans at prayer. They were all dressed up in their Sunday best and were entirely absorbed in their devotions, except one man who suddenly jumped up from time to time brandishing a whip cord and applying it quite freely upon a group of noisy boys who could only see humour in the situation. Their devotions consisted in readings, antiphonal singing and preaching, accompanied by the solemn beating of a large drum. All during this the faithful would rise *en masse*, bow to the East, which is towards Mecca, and prostrate themselves several times. The meeting seemed in-

terminable and lasted until after ten o'clock. Our boys were tired out, but were kept awake by the anticipation of the coming dancing. Finally the faithful began to roll up their mats and leave. Afterwards a "deacon" brought the Mohammendan "bishop" to pay his respects to us. He was a dignified old man, full of gracious bearing. He thanked us for coming to see them at their prayers. He said that, as he was tired, he was going to bed, but he would be very glad to have us stay for the dancing.

The drums were tuned up, throats cleared, and the dancing and singing began. The siesta which had been forced upon them seemed to add greater zest and spirit to their gaiety as they danced like demons. We were tired out as it was past our bedtime, but not so the players who stayed in the town. By this time individuals were gathering their own troupes of singers and dancers and moving all over the town. This desire for a troupe all one's own is really the ego showing itself. When anyone of importance travels, he always takes his group of musicians—the bigger the man, the larger the group. So the "small" man shows his desire for being "big" by seizing these occasions for gathering around him a bevy of girl dancers who are always glad to earn a few irons.

There is nothing the native likes more than dancing and every event in his life is an occasion to expend his pent-up emotion rhythmically. It is really his safety valve. If you ask a native what the people are dancing for, he will look at you with incredulity and will answer with some slight tone of irritation, "They are dancing because they are glad," thinking no doubt, "How stupid you are, what other cause would anyone dance for?" which makes

one feel as though he had asked foolish question number 100. Dancing like any other village act is highly communal and everybody takes part in it, young men and maidens, old men and children. There are no "wall flowers" as in a civilized country.

Never was there more compelling music than that made by a good corps of African drummers. The drums are made from a long section of a slender tree-trunk, hollowed out until the walls are very thin, monkey skins being stretched over the ends. While quite squalling in its resonance, the African drum has much less of the mellow, reverberant quality of the European drum. While it is not in the least harsh, its tone is far sharper, more staccato than booming. This comes from the fact that our northern drum is rather flat and shallow, while the African drum is long and narrow, the diameter of the head often not being more than one fourth the depth of the instrument. Not infrequently attached to it are bits of chain, or other metal of a ringing quality, which, as the drum is beaten, jangle musically in unison with its throbbing. Much of the drumming is done with the hands, the flat of the fingers, and the ball of the thumb. How they keep it up is a miracle! It goes on and on, never for a moment ceasing, often hour after hour.

The performers seem rather to increase in their vigour as the time passes. Occasionally some friend breaks from the crowd, and with a cloth wipes the streams of sweat from the face, neck and shoulders, or holds a calabash of water to the lips, of the performer; but never is there a suggestion that their activities be suspended for a rest, until the leader gives the signal.

When dancing among themselves, there is without doubt much in the dance that is sensual. I have observed that in night dancing in the village alleys, if a white visitor draws near with a lantern they often stop immediately. This points to a pleasant trait, or combination of traits, in the African character. In the first place, they think the visitor would not like this kind of dance, and their native courtesy forbids them to do what would offend the sensibilities of a guest; but there is also a shyness about them which is marked at times. The sensuality of the dance is a part of the play, so to speak, and they look upon it as a player on our own stage looks upon the scanty dress that might be assumed in a certain role, which he would not for reasons of decency think of wearing ordinarily in public. This shyness has great charm at all times.

Our journey back seemed a dreary one after all that ceremony. The fog had begun to thicken and the feeble light of the lantern cast ominous shadows which looked like curling snakes.

This morning ended the month of fasting for the Mohammedan, so with a group of the boys I made a pilgrimage to "Mecca." The men were sitting at the entrance to the town; the women, dressed like nuns, were praying under a tree some yards away. A chair was brought for me and I had a ringside seat. Everyone who could made an offering at this time—irons, rice, cotton, kola-nuts, etc., which was afterwards distributed to the poor. A gun was fired a couple of times to make known the beginning of the festivities. After a while I was asked to go and sit in the Palaver House used as their mosque, as they were all coming. We went there and a big bowl of rice and a

smaller one of fish was brought for the boys by the chief; I thanked him and it was carried off to be cooked. Meanwhile the procession had started going round the town to escort each dignitary to his hut.

The Mohammedans of Masambolahun are mostly Mandingoes, a fine looking, dignified race of negroes. We went to pay our respects to Fofi who was for a long time the Paramount Chief of this section. He was recently made a sort of bishop of this faith. He dashed us another big bowl of rice and a big fat rooster. So the school boys will have a little extra chop,—but very little, as it had to be divided amongst seventy boys.

The Mission had its beginning in Masambolahun, until the small town of Bolahun, about fifteen minutes walk from there, was given to establish a permanent settlement. The town of Masambolahun is almost wholly Mohammedan and it seems impossible for us to get a foothold to teach the Christian Faith. In spite of the fact that Fofi is such a devout “Molli” as the Mohammedans are called, he gladly gave us three of his sons to be educated in the school and become Christians.

There are “big doings” these days at St. Mary’s, Bolahun—Solemn Sung Mass with sacred ministers and the Gospel sung in Bandi. The vestments—chasuble, dalmatic and tunic—are kept in the monastery and carried down to the church on Sunday morning. One Sunday a school boy sacristan came running in great haste and said he wanted the three shirts for the Mass!

The other day a Sister sent her houseboy to get some small oranges from a tree near the church. Presently he came back with the Sanctus Bell. This had three small

yellow balls on it, which seemed to answer her description. So why wouldn't they do?

One of the Fathers was mixing some mortar and sent six boys with sacks for lime. They departed and filled their sacks with limes from a lime-tree. And so it goes, something new under the sun all the time.

— 15 —

SCHOOL vacation in West Africa comes in winter rather than summer, so school being closed makes one think of seeing new scenery. Therefore a two weeks' trek into the Bush was planned. For the trek it is necessary to take all one needs, including food. This consisted of six small cans of baked beans, one can of dried milk, one of condensed milk, a tin of sugar, one tin of tea and coffee, a jar of flour, three cans of meat, one can of Quaker Oats, one box of salt, one half pound of butter, and two tins of biscuits. We brought back only two cans of baked beans. Our supply, however, was supplemented in the various towns by oranges, bananas, chickens, eggs, fish—fresh from the rivers—rice, pineapple and pawpaw. So the wayfarer did not go hungry! Six carriers (two to carry a hammock), a native school teacher who acted as my guide and interpreter, and three school boys were my travelling companions. This caravan was considered extremely light for such a journey.

I had been told "no one travels for pleasure in Africa!" but I never understood the full force of it until after this pilgrimage. A native may have relatives in towns living only ten miles away but does not see them for years. Travelling in Liberia is really hard labor, and we walked about 150 miles. This itinerary is not found in Cook's Travels!

Monday morning, Dec. 27, we started out bright and early. Our first stop was two hours away at Kolahun, the

government station for this section. We met no government officials and only about two chiefs in all the towns we visited—which numbered exactly thirty. They had each received a command to be at Voinjama—the Buzi Government Station—and bring whatever they could—music, meat, rice, oil, palm-wine, cane-juice, etc.—to make merry at the Christmas festivities. From all reports a "wild time" was had by all.

The chief speaker for the District Commissioner gave us a lunch: chicken swimming in palm-oil and rice, and we provided tea. Here we met a group of school boys returning home. Two itinerant drummers were with them and they attached themselves to us. When the procession started they tuned up their drums and voices. The order of procession is a leader, the hammock with "big man" in it, the drummers, carriers and loads behind. The custom is for the drummers to play vigorously when leaving or entering a town. This rouses the whole population and you are given a marvelous send-off and reception. The drummers accompanied us to two towns and wanted to travel with us through the country—for a fee of course—but being a "small man" this was too much. After chop, a night's rest and a couple of irons they were dismissed.

A "highway" has been made by the natives right through to Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, and is a ten days' journey from Bolahun. The road is about twenty feet wide, but of course impassable for traffic, except by foot on account of bridges (hammock and monkey), swamps, rocks and roots of trees. Also for the most part it is in the dazzling glare of the sun. Much of the way we journeyed along trails which were well shaded. In the forests

we were greeted and tasted by plagues of flies. This trip was certainly made by "foot's express" as the roads and trails are so arduous the natives' one objective is to get to the next town, and nothing but a sharp command would cause them to rest. Indeed he dislikes very much to see you rest! Some of the distance is actually run. The native of course wears no shoes, and a regular pad, like the dried skin of an animal, is formed on the bottom of their feet which furnishes some measure of protection. If they stub their toes or cut themselves—which is remarkably seldom considering the indescribable roads—and any flesh hangs down, they simply slough it off or wait until the blood and dirt congeal the wound.

The natives thoroughly enjoy themselves on the march; talking, singing and shouting incessantly. One simply wonders what they find to talk about, although we have been told that the white man and his "strange doings" occupy a great deal of their conversation. The traveler, not understanding a word spoken, soon gets accustomed to it and hardly notices the noise at all, and is left free to think his own thoughts.

The towns are much the same, usually situated on the top of a high hill. After having walked for three or four hours the sight of a town was the most exhilarating sight I have ever seen. I can understand now what a joy the sight of a lighthouse must be to a sailor. The native has no sense of time. Sometimes he will tell you a town is four hours away and you find yourself doing it in two; or he will say it is an hour, and one could not RUN it in three. Coming to the top of a mountain, one catches a glimpse of the town on the next mountain and can

hardly refrain from breaking into shouts of joy or a fervent "Thanks be to God." But wait,—the town is so near and yet so far. You walk and walk and walk; it seems you will never reach it; but at last you see the inevitable giant cotton-wood trees which indicate the approach to a town. Sometimes these are deceptive as to the distance and then you come to some banana trees and feel pretty sure you are there; but it is still further on. Next come the graves on either side of the trail and you know you are on the very threshold of the town; yet there is still a hill to climb.

The area of a town is usually three or four city blocks, with the palaver-house in the center and the mushroom mud huts clustered around so close that many of them touch each other. A good-sized town contains about fifty huts, allowing five people to a hut—except a rich man with many wives. An exceptionally large town (which is most unusual) has about two hundred huts. The livestock—chickens and cows—ramble all over the town and into the huts. Milk is not drunk and one would have to look very closely for the udder; neither are the eggs of chickens eaten. Not a blade of grass is seen and the hard dry ground makes a painful glare in the hot sun.

On entering a town one goes straight to the palaver-house and the chief is sent for. The natives all crowd around to greet you and shake hands and snap fingers with every newcomer. To omit this would be a great act of discourtesy. The snapping of fingers is done in the most matter-of-fact way, never looking at each other but almost actually turning the head away. If just passing through, the chief will bring you the inevitable rice or chicken, and as he knows the white man eats eggs, he

will bring these. If he brings five, usually two are good, because all the eggs are simply left in the nest for the hen to sit on. Very few natives have ever tasted eggs and they are reluctantly given up now-a-days for the strange diet of the white man—for a price of course.

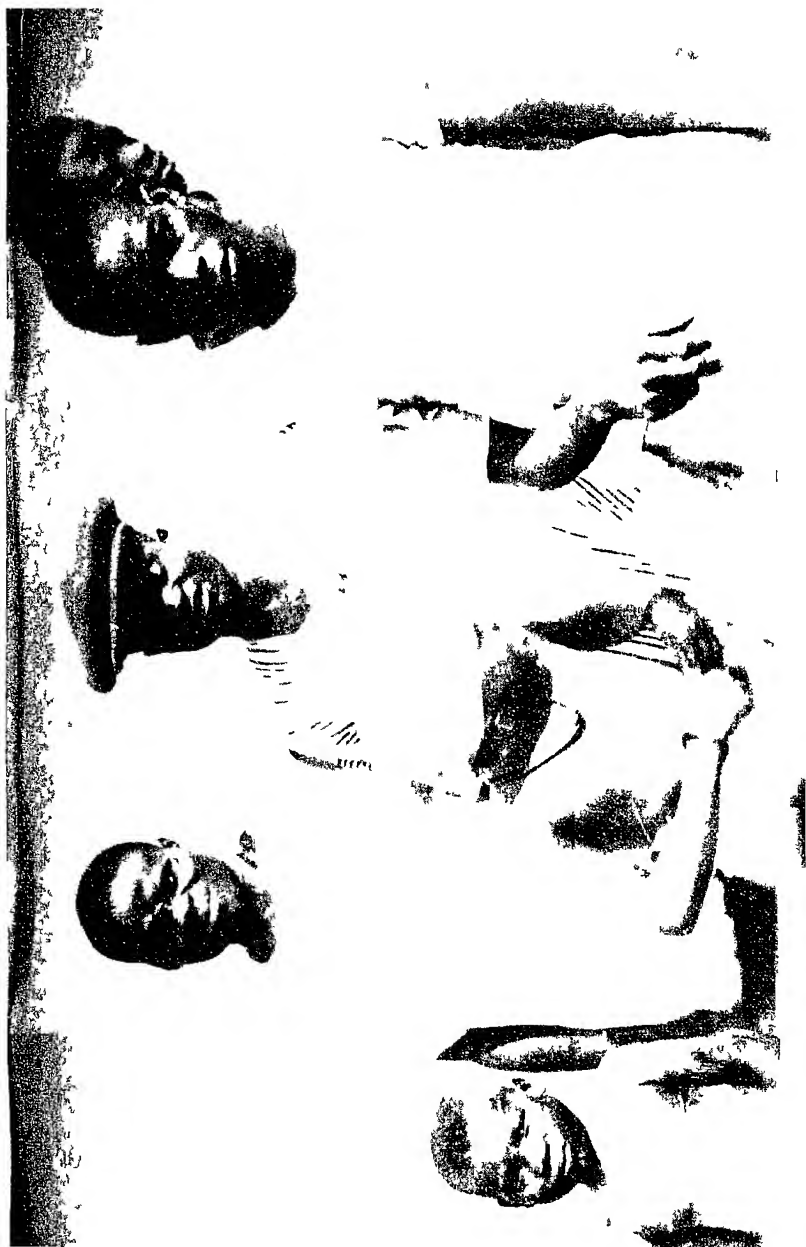
When one stays for the night the chief will provide a hut for the traveler and other huts for the carriers. Your bed, table, etc., are put up by your boy or "valet" and your cook makes a fire and prepares your food. When a large group is to be provided for, the chief will tell several people to cook a bowl of rice each. For our carriers we needed three good-sized washbowls of rice. These together with a dish of water are brought first for your inspection. The rice and water are carried off by the men. Each man rinses his hands with the water, and four or five sit around a bowl on the ground and eat it with their hands, enjoying it as a horse does his ration of oats. Afterwards his hands are rinsed again and he is ready for work or bed. He eats only twice a day and always rice.

The carriers were just like children. Every one except the teacher had some slight ailment on the way and they came to me to be doctored up. I am glad I took along some borax-acid, iodine, dysentery pills, bandages, ointment, salts and quinine. Aquoi had a sore eye and I took him to the doctor at Zorzor who gave him some salve which he used once or twice; but when he came to a certain town he went to a native doctor who prescribed some white concoction which looked like a pair of white goggles smeared all over his eyes. Aquoi evidently had more confidence in this than in the white man's medicine. Another carrier hurt his foot so badly it was necessary to leave him

three days' journey behind us. We left him in the care of Momolu, paying him to take good care of him. The next morning one thanks the chief and gives him a suitable dash for his hospitality—usually one shilling and sixpence: thirty-seven cents. Where in America could one get board and a place to sleep for ten persons for so small an amount?

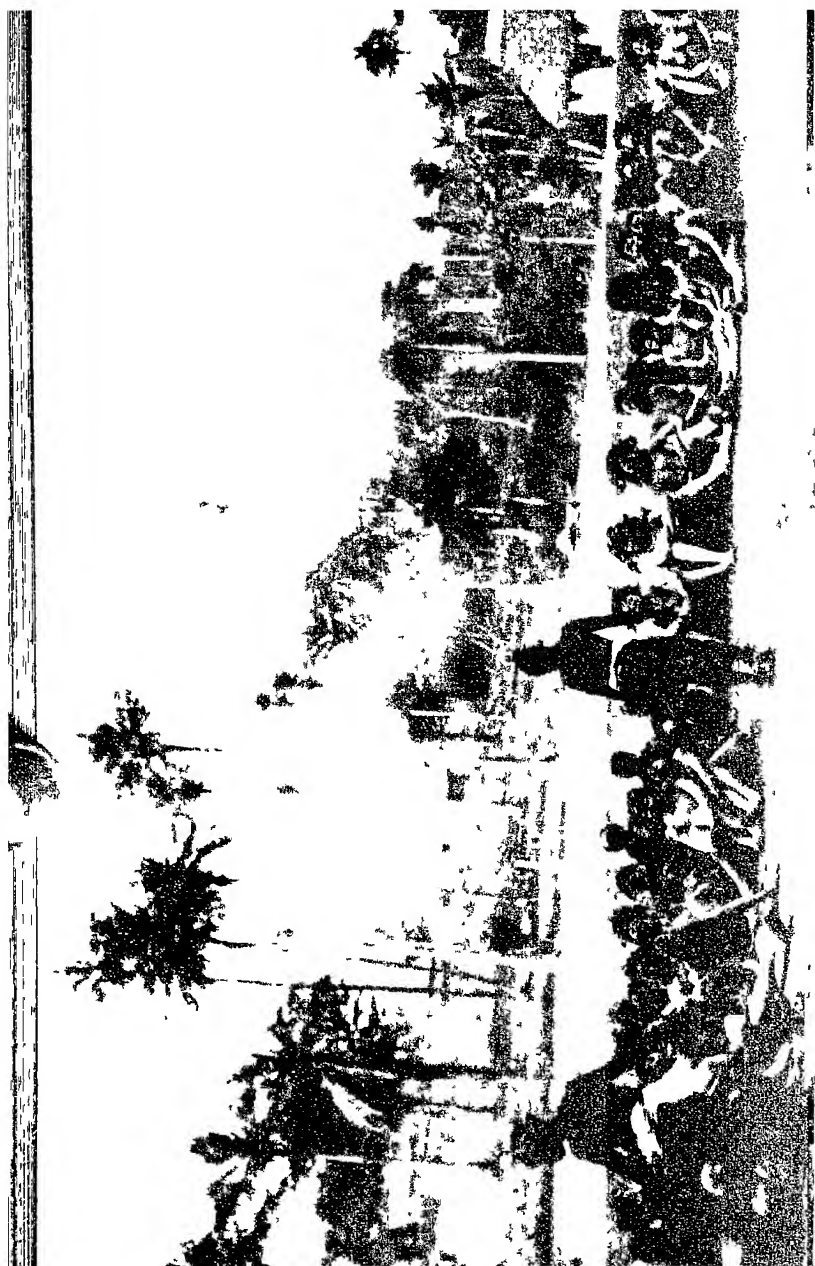
As the first gleam of light dawns in the east the whole town is astir and it is useless to think of sleeping; so we were up and on our travels by seven every morning and walked until two or three o'clock. Our arrangement for two carriers for the hammock was to get them from the chief to carry us to the next town. These being fresh, can travel with greater energy. It puts one in mind of the days when travelling was done by stage coach and fresh horses were provided at different stops. I simply had to get new hammock-carriers, as the two I brought with me refused to carry me any further. The pay for a distance of two or three hours is threepence each. Very often the carriers will walk straight back to their town. We took along a gramophone with a few hymn records and this was a great attraction.

For a bath a bucket of hot water is furnished by a woman of the town and you simply splash it over you. There is generally a bath-house provided for strangers, but the natives usually bathe themselves from a bucket under the eaves of a hut. Providing water for cooking and washing is woman's work and no man or boy would think of doing it. Morning and evening there is a regular parade of the women and girls of a town to the water-side to fetch water.









In the woods a certain kind of white ants make their house out of soil and decaying matter. The ant pillars are about two feet high, looking like mushrooms, one on top of the other. the top one is larger, resembling a protecting umbrella. These are called "korkorngies" and are the special patrons of twins. Some of them are collected and placed in a small thatched-roof shed outside the town which becomes the place of worship for the twins who live in that town. Suitable offerings—irons or rice—are made and placed around these shrines. The whole thing looks very much like our Christmas crèche.

Many towns have devil houses where the devils (spirits) live. They are usually on the outskirts of the town. A framework of lattice or dried grass is the entrance. A section in front is cleared of vegetation and stuck in the ground and on the framework are the fronds of palm-kernel holders. These grow in clusters about the size of a horse's head. Before being placed in front of a devil's entrance they are burnt black which indicates that a sacrifice has been made. The devil houses are held in great awe and no one except members of the Devil Society would dream of entering their sacred precincts. I tried to get some one to take me inside, but it was looked upon with horror and the assurance that I would be eaten up if I did any such thing.

The third day we arrived at Pandemai. This is the town which Fr. Hawkins visited when looking for a possible site for the Mission. For some years great hope was held out for the extension of the Church's work there, and Fr. Dwalu, a native priest, did well and started a school. One passes the school buildings just outside the

town. They are fast falling into decay and crying out for the Church's support to carry it further.

On entering the town one sees the brick foundation of a good-sized church, and it is rather startling to read the names of Bishop Campbell, Fr. Huntington, Fr. Hawkins, and Miss Ridgely carved in black letters on the cornerstones. At the beginning of the depression this work was stopped for lack of funds. Fr. Dwalu still has a group of boys whom he teaches on the porch of his hut and also does some evangelistic work. It was a joy to meet him and his good wife. Meeting people who spoke English fluently and sitting down in style for meals was like coming home for Thanksgiving dinner. He gladly gave us the privilege of hearing Mass before continuing our journey. It was here I learned that one must never use the term "colored person" in Africa, as it is thought to convey some sinister meaning. One should always speak of a "black man" or an "African."

A couple of days before our arrival at Pandemai a native medicine man had died and the next day formal notice of his death was to be given to the townspeople. So promptly at four o'clock in the morning a small handbell was heard being rung by the devil, with the patter of bare feet running around the town. This took about five minutes, and then a shout was heard and in every hut there was great lamentation and weeping by the women which lasted until daybreak.

Sitting on his porch after supper, Fr. Dwalu told us these interesting events:

A shipment of Indian rice was shipped from Monrovia to Cape Mount. During the voyage some native tobacco

was placed on the rice. Somehow or other it became wet. The rice duly arrived at the school and was cooked and served. After the meal Fr. Dwalu went to the school building and rang the bell but no one turned up. He rang it again and still nothing happened. So he went to investigate and found all the boys and Mrs. Dwalu sleeping or in a mild state of intoxication. Looking into the cause of this, it developed that the juice of the tobacco had permeated all the rice, and when eaten it had produced this blissful state. There was no school that day!

For sometime medicines were sent to Fr. Dwalu, which he distributed from a small dispensary. One day three young children were sent to a relative's hut to stay there while their parents went visiting. The woman in the hut had to go to her farm work. She came back about midday and was horrified to see the children in convulsions. She called for help and friends ran with the children to Fr. Dwalu. Two were dead when they reached his house. He was told about the other child and hastily got together an emetic and ran with it to the third child. He made her swallow it, which caused her to vomit. This eventually saved her life. What had happened was this: As soon as the woman had gone to her farm the children began playing around the hut and caught a big frog. This they took and put on the fire and cooked and ate. The frog was rank poison.

When a woman carrying her unborn child dies, or dies in childbirth, there is great fear and consternation in the town. It is a sure sign that a malignant spirit is the cause. The body is wrapped in a mat, carried all around the town and at last taken to a swamp, weighted with

sticks and stones, and stood upon until forced into the swamp. The husband of the woman then has to wage a mimic war with the women of the town, in which battle he is to be the loser. He is then caught by the neck and made to pay a sum of money. Afterwards the hut is pulled down and everything in it is destroyed.

As soon as a native baby is born the medicine man or diviner is sent for. He produces a receptacle with some water in it and tells the parents that if wrigglers—embryo mosquitoes—are seen in a few days in the water the child will live and be successful. Rice flour and kola-nuts are put into the water and fed to the child from time to time as a sort of medicine. Some is also put into the child's bath, and around the hut. When the child is weaned the diviner asks for money, and the receptacle is taken away. If the child dies before it is weaned this is an act of God and not caused by evil spirits, since no evil spirit would dare to come near the "medicine."

Not only in America but in Africa the natives have the great ambition of "getting rich quickly." Along the trails we met seekers after gold and saw huge holes near streams used for washing the rock. Even the school teacher, Abraham Bala, has been fired with this ambition, procured a book on mineralogy, and brought back specimens of rock. This made six of our school boys see visions of untold riches and they have gone to dig for gold. One day of this was enough and they came back to the Mission minus shirts (which had been stolen), and wiser for the experience.

In another town a woman had died and she was wrapped in a cover cloth, placed on a mat, and the women went

carrying her body from place to place. The corpse was taken into the hut and the mourners came out and walked around the town, stopped at certain huts, knelt down and made some incantation. Afterwards they proceeded to the Bush, bringing back some branches and repeated the ceremony. It was necessary to get the chief's permission to take their pictures; this done, they gladly posed for a shot. It seemed a huge joke to them.

Here when we asked for a carrier the headman thought it a good chance to make a bit of extra money, and said he would not give us one until we paid him a shilling before starting. After laying down the law to him, he quickly gave us a carrier without the money. It is a government regulation that a chief must furnish carriers to carry the traveller to the next town. If it is a distance of an hour or so it is unnecessary to pay anything.

The "Delphian Oracle" is still functioning here in Africa. The oracle is a diviner or sorceress, and each town has one. When any expert advice or protection is needed, the help of these oracles is sought. The troubled one is told—for a fee, because even diviners must live—what he is to do to bring about the desired objective. The enquirer must make a sacrifice, which is proclaimed in many ways. We saw towns and houses entirely surrounded by a kind of cable made of fibre, bunches of leaves, rice and irons, lying on stones or hanging up. All these were sacrifices. In one town a chief had sought help of the diviner to protect from falling the young men who climb palm-trees. Their sacrifice was to mix some soot with oil and rub it all over their bodies; make a hat of leaves and put on kola-

nuts and wear the outfit the whole day. One of them was our carrier and brought his sacrifice with him.

We arrived at Zorzor on the evening of the sixth day, Saturday, New Year's Day, and stayed until Monday. A Lutheran Mission is there and is doing fine work. The Lutherans have been in Liberia since 1842 and have several Stations. We greatly enjoyed our visit. Here we saw the remains of one of the great walls which were built of mud around the town, for protection in time of war. It is amazing how strongly those walls were built to withstand the torrential downpour of rains year after year.

Our caravan next rested at Sobelama, the village of one of our schoolboys; and the boys had a fine chance to wash their clothes. His father, whose name is Momolu, received us most kindly and did everything possible for our comfort, even putting reed mats on the floor. This man was the most interesting one I have met in Liberia. He is about 55, as straight as a ramrod, white hair, whiter than any I have seen in Africa. Momolu used to be a soldier in the Liberian Army and his hobby must have been collecting wives. He has so many he cannot keep count of them, and children without number. Our schoolboy's mother has borne him seven children.

I asked Momolu to pose for a picture with his whole family; he gladly did so and called together as many as possible of his household. I counted seventeen wives and many children and was told this was not half of them. In selecting his wives I am sure Momolu had a great eye for beauty! I said to him, "You have done more than your share for your country and President Barclay ought to give you a medal of merit." At this his face fairly beamed.

His family lives in five huts. I went into each one. The largest must have housed ten wives and their small children. Three fires were burning in it and the wives and children were sitting about cooking the evening meal. The mud beds are all around the walls. Momolu lives in a hut close by, alone, and each wife in turn sleeps with him for three nights. In each wife-hut a head-wife rules and others must do as she says. Some of them come from different tribes and are separated into groups according to dialect.

I invited James Willei's mother to come and have a cup of tea with me. It was a joy to see her evident satisfaction, as no doubt it was the first in her life. In fact she was so pleased she drank two cups! The crackers she did not eat but took them to the hut with her. They would no doubt keep longer, or she wanted to share them with her children. In the evening ten of the wives came in for a visit, three at a time, all dressed up in clean loin-cloths, and head-kerchiefs. They sat on the mud bed without saying a word; stayed for five minutes and another group came in. I said, "I feel highly honored in having such a delegation visit me." At this they all grinned. I am afraid they felt a little slighted as I did not offer them any refreshments.

As we sat in Momolu's hut later that night, he told me this incident which happened some years ago down the country, nearer the coast, while he was in the army:

A Commissioner who was engaged in the annual collection of taxes from the natives, sent three collectors into his district, himself following a short time after to receive the reports of his subordinates. The Chief of

the country had given much trouble, and had resisted the authorities in every way he could. Soon after the arrival of the Commissioner three old women appeared at his quarters, each with a box, which according to native custom, they laid respectfully at his feet, declaring that it was a present from the Chief, after which they disappeared. The Commissioner, who had anticipated much difficulty, was naturally pleased, thinking the Chief had repented and sent him an olive branch. Then the boxes were opened. It was an olive branch with a vengeance. Each box contained the head of one of his tax-collectors!

Some one had broken a Bush-Devil Society rule and the devils were coming to this town to talk it over. The chief came in to warn us not to be alarmed at anything which might happen. About dusk the devils arrived incognito. Every woman ran into her hut and shut the door, and some one shut mine. A great silence settled over the town while the devils passed through and the whole population seemed to breathe a sigh of relief after they had gone. In the morning we saw the remains of the fire where they had evidently made their sacrifices.

In certain sections, towns are very far apart and the women would not come to market, so the Clan Chief had to make a law that five women from every town must come and bring produce to sell in the market. Strict account is kept of the women who come and if the required number does not appear the whole town is fined. We met some of these "unwilling" vendors coming to market and it was after eleven o'clock in the morning, whereas the market usually begins at nine. They are held under immense spreading cotton-wood trees.

At Zorzor during a session an ominous sound was heard from a giant tree and the women all fled. Nothing happened and they sat under the tree again. Then a great limb crashed down and killed twenty outright. One woman with her baby on her back was cut in two. By a miracle the baby was saved and is now being brought up at the Lutheran Mission. A government order was soon issued to cut down all big trees and overhanging limbs in market places.

Along the trail sharp reports are heard and you look up into a huge towering tree. The reports are the bursting of the giant pods containing beans the size of a cookie. The pods are gathered and burned to make dye and soap; the beans are roasted and when eaten taste like raw peanuts. When meeting anyone with palm-wine it is a native custom that a traveller has the right to demand a drink of him if he is the owner.

After two or three days' hard walking when one comes to rest one has the same feeling as after being on an ocean voyage. One feels the motion of the ship for a long time. So much walking gave me the sensation that my legs were still marching on, long after sitting down to rest. The first night at the Mission I dreamed I saw the Empire State Building stretch up into the sky and that I walked straight up! We arrived home safely Saturday morning, January 8. It was a welcome sight to see the flowers blooming so gaily in the monastery garden after the endless monotony of green.

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THERE are two trails from Bolahun to Kpangihemba, both of which must be considered before starting out on patrol. One is a long circuitous road which takes about three hours; the other is a more direct route which cuts off about an hour. Both cross the swift-flowing Kaiha River. The long way has a hammock-bridge to cross, while on the other the river must be swum or chances taken on finding a raft. During the rainy season we usually go the long way. When this trip was made there had been heavy rains, but, as distance is a great factor, we decided to chance the short way. So we started out at 1:30 with the usual caravan.

We arrived at the river but no raft was in sight. After much persuasion, I finally got the boys to undress and attempt to swim the river; one boy walked out up to his middle in the water when the rapids swiftly carried him off his feet—so that would not do. We saw some boys on the opposite bank and yelled to them to get some of the men of their town to help us cross. After waiting three-quarters of an hour they came. One tall man stripped and walked out, only to be picked up by the strong current. Should we give up and go back? But this is not what a missionary does. Let us make a raft. This had to be done on the opposite bank. If it had been merely swimming the river that would have been comparatively easy; but what about the bed-bag, chop-box, and other things? The boys once more jumped in and swam across and with the men

from the town set to work with a right good will to make a raft. Meanwhile, I sat down and said Vespers and Compline.

So, armed with a cutlass, they started chopping and hacking away. Three fair-sized logs were brought to the river bank and tied together by means of roots and vines. It seemed as though they were getting miles of vines which had to be stretched out and made four-ply. It was getting dark and thunder clouds were gathering. Streaks of lightning flashed in the east. At last all seemed ready. An old root cable had been left from the former raft. The new one was tied onto this and we started to pull across when snap—it broke. One of our boys took the end in his mouth and swam the river with it and we pulled over the strong cable and anchored it securely. A large loop was fastened from the raft to the cable and pushed into the water. Would it hold? It did and was piloted over in safety. One boy sat on the raft and another worked it. The bulky bed-bag was taken first, one end dipping in the water and then the other. The impedimenta were finally across and then I got on and took the "steering wheel" in hand. My shoes were under water. The swift current tugged away and once or twice I had visions of floating down stream or being dismembered by crocodiles, but I landed without mishap. The bed was soaked and the chop-box half full of water. Luckily it was all canned food. The men were dashed one and six and were very grateful, though not nearly as much as we were.

Off we started again, praying that the rain would not come before we reached the town. We were just in time for it poured as it can pour only in the tropics. But no

evangelist and interpreter! Was all that work for nothing? Some minutes later we heard the welcome "Issa"—the night was saved! How I wish you might see Cyprian. He has a beautifully formed body which would be a perfect specimen as a model for sculpturing. His father was a notable leader in the slave trade.

A leper woman came in to see me. She sat down on the mud bed and I gave her news of her son Gabriel, who is at school. Her toes have all been eaten away by the disease. I had told Gabriel I saw his mother on another trip; he seemed pleased, but he said, "You saw my mother? God has punished her with sickness." He said it in such an awe-struck tone that I hastened to explain to him that this was not so.

Thinking I would make sure our boys would be provided for properly, I asked the chief, who had come to see me, if he would furnish chop for the boys. He went on talking about something else and I repeated my request. He said, "You don't have to tell me what to do when strangers come to my town. I know what I ought to do." So I felt justly rebuked. Taking care of the stranger is the primary duty of the native and to err in this respect would be a very serious breach of etiquette. When the new rice is gathered in, a portion is always put away safely for the strangers. What a great deal they could teach the civilized man!

Our next town was Lahuma two hours distance away. Here a mother came in to ask if we could do anything for her son who had been sick for two months. She brought him in and I could see he was in a bad way. There was little I could do. I give him some aspirin and quinine and

a cup of tea, and the next morning coffee; but it was all too late. Word came two days later that he was dead. A little girl was brought in with a badly burnt arm and a boy with his big toe almost cut off. I bandaged these up. I was glad I took along a few first-aid things.

The bridge across the river near this town had broken down and every man had orders to furnish his quota of roots and fibre to make a new one. This is all taken to the place and left there and in the night the devils are supposed to come and make the bridge. Should we have to go back the way we came? The women were going that day to market and were to use an old tree for a bridge so we decided to follow them. A great tree with its branches was across the river and one must walk charily on these. One of the boys carried a woman's baby over. Working my way inch by inch, I finally got to the other side. When I stepped off onto what appeared to be dry leaves, down I sank over my knees into the water. This gave the boys and women a great laugh. Well, I simply had to walk in wet shoes. After an hour's walking the soles began to come off.

We have planted about 100 orange trees on either side of the road leading to the Sisters'. In about ten years' time think of the shade and fruit these trees will furnish! The native has no scruples about cutting down trees, and if it were not for nature repairing the damage, whole sections would soon be laid bare. The native has no time for the cultivation of fruit, except the banana, which is raised chiefly for the soap made from the stalk of the tree. But since the advent of the Mission the schoolboys have taken a few orange trees and avocado pear trees and planted them

near their town. The fruit is usually brought to the market and sold to the white people. Fr. Gorham planted half a mile of avocado pear trees some years ago and now they give excellent shade. Anyone passing by usually helps himself to the fruit.

We are "fortunate" these days in having fresh meat. A couple of school boys go out and shoot monkeys. It always gives me the creeps when I see them bringing one in. This afternoon two were brought. The monkeys are held by the hands and hang down like babies. It is said to be very sweet meat but I have so far held off from tasting it.

Momolu, who is the man with many wives and children of whom I wrote in my vacation letter, is to found a new town. The reason is that he had a palaver with his chief and it is difficult for them to live in peace any longer. So he will go out and pick a possible site; go to the diviner and ask if the town will be prosperous or not. He then notifies the District Commissioner, but the D. C. has no power to stop him from starting a town. Hitherto sites for towns were always on a high hill or mountain and a great mud wall was built entirely around as a protection against warring tribes; but today sites in valleys are more favoured because it is easier to get the water supply. The head man next notifies the chief of his intention to leave his town and a time limit is fixed in order that he may do required work and save paying hut taxes in two towns. Some men are sent to build the huts. When everything is ready, the headman will place an iron on the grave of his ancestor for one night, so that his spirit may enter into the iron. The next morning it is carried to a freshly dug

grave in the new town, so that the ancestor's spirit will protect it.

A big man with many wives has also young men who have attached themselves to him for various purposes—for protection, for steady labor or to work off debts they cannot pay. Before leaving the town the headman asks if anyone desires his old huts. If there is a door or window-frame, these must be paid for or they are taken out. In case no one wants the huts they have to be broken down before leaving. Strangers hearing of the peace and prosperity and good treatment of outsiders come and live in the new town and it gradually grows. When people are many and no more houses can be built on the site, a certain number must start a new foundation. This was often necessary when towns were built on top of hills but, now that they are in the valleys, the towns of the future will be larger.

— 17 —

OUR District Commissioner has been called to a higher seat in the government and appointed Head of Tribal Affairs in the Interior. This is a newly created job. So a "send-off" was arranged for him at Kolahun, the government station for this section. An invitation had come for Richard Heydorn and he cordially invited me to go along. He went the day before, hiring the town band to accompany him for a dramatic entry into the government center. I did not have an official invitation, but uninvited guests sometimes appear at parties, so I decided to go. Saturday bright and early I was ready for anything. Two carriers for a two-man hammock, a schoolboy, David Dui, and a canteen of water went along. Luckily we had only an occasional shower.

Kolahun is a big town lying in a broad valley, with roads stretching out like the spokes of a wheel in many directions. As it is a good location for the government headquarters, it would also be an ideal place for a central Mission station, giving, as it does, easy access not only to all the upper Liberian country, but to Sierra Leone and French Guinea, and constituting the center of a populous region. Long before we came to the confines of the town, we saw it afar off, the thatch of its many conical roofs presenting a dull gold silhouette against the intense blue of the sky. The first distant glimpse of the Liberian standard with its single star of white in a field of blue, flaunting its gay welcome from a lofty staff above the government

house, was, therefore, a welcome sight as we drew near to Kolahun.

We arrived at the "garrison" at noon feeling like eating the very rocks. A soldier stopped us at the entrance, and after the usual formalities we were escorted to the District Commissioner's residence. We had a lovely chat, but nothing was said about dinner and we were beginning to feel faint. There we met Heydorn and Fr. Dwalu. After the chat Heydorn and I decided to go into the town. When we were outside I asked him about lunch and he replied in a most unconcerned tone that they had had a very fine lunch two hours ago. Heydorn seemed indifferent as to whether we got anything to eat or not, but after entreating and scolding he finally thought he could get a little chop for the carriers.

I took my troubles to Mr. Cassell, telling him I did not enjoy the prospect of an empty stomach until after six o'clock. His cook was away but he graciously consented to get some food for us at three-thirty. Then I went back to the garrison, met Heydorn, and told him of my luck. While there, a special invitation for the banquet was brought to me by a soldier. It was a type-written sheet and read as follows:

Commissioner E. S. Freeman Cordially invites
you to a Send-off Reception in honour of Honourable
Varni Jakema Fahnbulleh, August the 13th instant,
at the Kolahun Market Hall, at the hour of 3:00
P.M. precisely.

Kolahun,

August 12th, 1938

R.S.V.P.

So things were straightening out. To town we went again. It was here I saw for the first time prisoners with a heavy chain fastened to their legs working on the road. Now Fr. Dwalu brought us the "cheerful" news that our names were on the programme for a speech—and all thoughts of hunger were forgotten. In the meantime our friend Heydorn had wandered to the market-place and tasted its most delicious punch. He was quite sure he had discovered a "kick" in it, though he said nothing about my having the same pleasing experience. But he really had found out this was to be no ordinary celebration, as things were to be "done up brown." So this was the great secret of nothing having been said about lunch.

Reveille was sounded, soldiers stood at attention, the flag unfurled, drums rolled, a procession formed, and, escorted by singers and dancers, we proceeded to the D.C.'s house. There another procession was starting; the whole battalion of ten soldiers at the head, the staff, Heydorn and I—the only white persons present,—the flag, and the D.C. and his escort, chiefs (all gorgeously appalled); the whole town, with singers and dancers bringing up the rear.

The market-place, a new one (the old having blown down) is of native construction, built in the shape of the top of a capital letter T. This was beautifully decorated with arches and flowers, and country mats on the floor, small tables placed around, each covered with a different colored native cloth of red, white, and blue check. It had an unbelievably Bohemian atmosphere. Four people were placed at each table. The D. C., dressed in a white uniform, sat on a big chair at a small table over which

was a white cloth. Two placards hung, one on either side, on which were printed in French "Dieu vous accompagne," and in English—"God be with you." Fr. Dwalu, Heydorn and I sat at a table on the District Commissioner's left and the Assistant D. C., Mr. Cassell, Mr. Nurse and Capt. Brewer on his right. At other tables sat Paramount Chiefs, Clan Chiefs and Town Chiefs. Outside the natives crowded the doors and windows, looking on in wonder at the marvelous sight.

First came an explanation of the meaning of such a feast—the first of its kind most of the chiefs had ever attended. Our good friend Mr. Cassell was chairman, and many a dinner in America would have been glad of such a capable manager. Many verbal bouquets were offered, each trying to outdo the other, interpreted by two native speakers, one Bandi, the other Kissi. The main dish was roast chicken with stuffing; and there were soup, crackers, cookies, cake, rum, bottled-lemonade, beer, port-wine and cigarettes. Capt. Brewer toasted the Liberian Army and "brought down the house." Fr. Dwalu responded to the toast to the President. Next came my turn to say a few words to the distinguished gathering.

It was towards the end of the festivities and they had listened to many speeches. You couldn't hear yourself speak for the noise going on. I stood up and began. "District Commissioner and Friends:" but the din continued and I began again and then I yelled out "A bi solei wa!" ("all keep quiet.") Whether it was my Bandi or the speaker's which startled them into quietness I don't know. But at last all was quiet and I said:

"District Commissioner and Friends: It's a joy to

be here. I would not have missed it for anything. Today is the first opportunity I have had of meeting our distinguished Mr. Fahnbulleh, and I must say that I feel that I would have enjoyed and profited by knowing him more intimately.

"The purposes of government are for the well-being and governing of the people. According to the testimonies which have been poured out so eloquently today in honor of our District Commissioner, a great deal has been accomplished in material works and in fostering a deepening love and respect for him and the entire government.

"There has always existed the most cordial relationship between Liberian government officials and the Holy Cross Mission, and I feel sure that that bond of understanding and help will go on increasing. So on behalf of every one connected with the Mission I extend to you our sincere prayers and wishes as you go to a higher place in government work. May your labours be so blessed that you may be called to an even more exalted position, and may you win the loyalty and love of all the people you are privileged to lead." Heydorn followed with a speech commenting on all the improvements he had seen in his travels through the territory.

A presentation of two country gowns and a very long white cloth was made to the D. C. In presenting gifts the African has in mind the symbolic meaning rather than the value of a gift. The white cloth was opened before handing it over, which symbolized putting into it the whole section of the country in a gesture of goodwill. Of the two gowns, one represented the good feeling of the Bandi people and the other the Kissi. The D. C. was

asked to take them with him to Monrovia and hang them up in his office so that every time he looked at them they would be a reminder of the love of the natives of the Hinterland for him. Our party left about six, as we had a good two-hour walk ahead of us. We arrived back in time for Compline.

The interior of the country in Liberia is governed by what is known as the "indirect method." A District Commissioner represents the government and is appointed by the President to oversee a large section. He has usually been educated in the Mission Schools and the College of Liberia in Monrovia.

One principal point of the system of "indirect rule" is that the chiefs are elected by their people, the government having a veto where the choice is regarded as unwise, and exercising the power of deposition where it seems needed. The veto has been rarely employed, I am told, and the choice is generally for life or during good behaviour. Each tribe has a Paramount Chief who represents the native side of affairs. Under him are Clan Chiefs ruling over a number of towns in a tribe and each town has a Town Chief who looks after the affairs of his own people.

The lands, according to both the tribal law, and the Liberian Regulations, are held by the Paramount Chief and his council, in trust for the tribe. The alienation of lands is strictly forbidden, and long leases are difficult to obtain. The various Missions hold their real estate only as long as they are used for religious purposes, and grants are made with great reluctance. The Holy Cross Mission at Bolahun, which has done so much for the people, and whose work has been generously recognized by the gov-

ernment officials, has never in the nearly twenty years of its existence been able to induce the government to make it a grant of land on any terms. It holds its lands on sufferance only, with the good will of the neighbouring chiefs. The rule, as it is generally applied, is an excellent one, and safeguards the land rights of the native admirably.

— 18 —

No it is by no means unbearably hot in Liberia!

People often feel sorry for those who live in the tropics, thinking they are just sizzling under a broiling sun all the time. But such is not the case. Here in Liberia the weather is simple and uniform. There are no great changes from a high temperature to below zero as there are in New York State. There are no violent cyclones. When the sun is traveling north or south of the equator, thunder storms accompany high winds, but they seem to do little or no damage. I have not yet seen a tree blown down or a hut stripped of its thatch. The duration of the storm is very short. What brings the change in weather here is the daily and annual march of the sun. Non-periodic weathers are wholly subordinate.

The mean temperature is high and uniform, as seen from the record which was kept at the Mission for a year. The average elevation of this part of the country is about 2,000 feet.

Thermometer Readings in Fahrenheit.

Month	Maximum	Minimum	Rainfall for the
			Month
January	81	46	0.0
February	84	58	1.90
April	86	68	7.41
June	82	68	9.68
August	80	66	17.84
October	82	68	13.75
December	83	69	.34

The lowest record for cold which has been registered at the Station was when the thermometer dropped to 46 Fahr. The thermometer is kept inside the Mission building, and outside variations were probably 10 degrees higher for heat and 10 degrees lower for cold.

The seasons are not classified according to temperature, but depend on rainfall and the prevailing winds. And so the life of animals and plants and man himself is regulated very largely, in some cases almost wholly, by rainfall. The rains are usually very heavy, especially at the beginning and end of the rainy season. Most frequently the showers are such as we have at home. A little while ago during a storm we picked up hail-stones as big as lima beans. We often have beautiful rainbows. It is the sun which produces the rainfall. The intense heat of the sun passing overhead causes evaporation and this forms dense clouds which mercifully cover the sun as they follow it on its annual pilgrimage. Hence, even though the sun be directly overhead it is not the hottest time of the year. For this reason the rainy season is sometimes called the winter. When the sun does break forth from the clouds it is very hot.

Seldom is there a wholly clear day even in the dry season, because the intense heat of the sun causes evaporation, and in the cool of the evening the moisture in the air condenses into a heavy mist so that at night and morning it is quite foggy, with the dew so thick it is hard to believe there has been no rain. We rarely see the sun before 7:00 or 7:30 o'clock. And then the dazzling light of the sun and the glare on the clayey ground is very trying on one's eyes. The twilight is not nearly so sudden as

people imagine, although it does come much more rapidly than in New York. Before a storm the clouds roll up in great banks and their formations sometimes would send an artist into raptures. If you can imagine living in a greenhouse you will have a good idea of the weather during the rainy season.

January is usually the driest and coolest month of the year, as will be seen from the table on p. 123. The "Harmattan" or Desert winds begin in this month and give the atmosphere a smoky, hazy appearance. This is caused by the small particles of sand carried by these hot dry winds. Moisture evaporates very quickly at this time, so that everything becomes dry. Furniture and woodwork often swell and crack. Even one's skin feels peculiarly unpleasant, due to the rapid evaporation of perspiration.

Whenever the devils of Africa are thought of by the uninformed white man's mind there is always something dark and sinister. But this is not true. The devil holds a very important place in African native life and undoubtedly wields great power over the hearts of the natives. The devil and his assistants conduct the Bush Schools and attend every function where gaiety and fun are needed; funerals of important persons to divert the mind and drive away sorrow; the installation of a new chief; the closing of a Bush School, and also in removing bodies from graves. It was necessary to have this gruesome task done at the Mission. So the devil was sent for. He asked for a little kerosene and a box of matches. The bottle was taken from amongst some others. The devil took the kerosene and matches and went about his job. The next day he came back, his face beaming and asked for more oil.

"What did you do with that we gave you yesterday?" he was asked. "I drank it," said he. It then dawned on us that he was given a precious bottle of port-wine which was sent to us for Christmas! There was nothing else to do but give him some more kerosene.

It is only when the devil travels incognito that women and men (including white men) who have not been through the Bush School must remain hidden until he passes. At other times the women and children are always on hand to join in the fun. After dancing, the devil expects bunches of irons. These are thrown on the ground at the feet of the devil, and his assistants pick them up. There are three devils in the Bandi Tribe: Landa the big devil, Kortor his son, and the Up-devil on stilts. To be picked out to follow the profession of "devil" is a high honor and one has to put in a long period of training. One of our most devoted Evangelists, Zachariah Boto, was in training for this career when he heard the story of the Gospel and decided to follow Christ.

This letter was brought to the Mission recently by an "educated" native, applying for work. Don't you think it is delightful?

"Dear Rev.

"Hope you are pretty well. I have the honour most respectfully to draw you these few lines of mine which may meet you in good health. Having received by flying news by the intellectual machine of hearing. I take upon myself the audacity of forwarding to you this my poor humble application.

"On the tenth of this month I make to understand that you are putting up some Buildings of bricks and iron

rails in you District for the maintenance and improvement of your school boys, I beg to offer myself as a good Mason, Blacksmith, Baker or Shoemaker, as I cultured these four trades during my early youthage. I am a man of twenty-eight years of age, and have got worldly knowledge throughout besides the mention of trades. If these do not meet your favourable approval I will be glad if you will give a chance elsewhere or pass over the application to anyone you may think fit desirous of employing a man in one of mention trades.

I remain to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant, N----."



- 19 -

LAST Thursday afternoon I set out on patrol, and returned here Saturday morning. I forgot to take bed-clothes and had to sleep in the bed-bag with all my clothes on, for two nights. The evangelist and I preached in two towns. The palaverhouse was crowded each time and it was a joy to see their evident satisfaction.

On meeting each other on the trail the usual exchange greeting of the native Bandi goes something like this:

"Ya ni?"

(Are you there?)

"U yi va"

(Yes, you have come)

"Mi lo ya li na?"

(Where are you going?)

"Nya nga li tai hun"

(I am going to my town)

"E kegei lo na?"

(Is your father there?)

"U"

(Yes)

"E njei lo na?"

(Is your mother there?)

"U"

(Yes)

"U Ma lo ho."

(Au revoir.)

"U Ma lo ho."

(Au revoir.)

They invariably ask each other where they are going. Besides showing interest it affords an opportunity to warn them of the danger on the trail: a washout, a fallen tree, a broken bridge, or what may be expected in the town ahead. Also to ask if your father or mother is there is perfectly proper, because frequently a man's wife is living in a different town from that of her husband.

The first town was Kpangihemba, which means "a town set on a hill." However, I think they all might be called this, as the great majority are situated on a hill. It was the first one I visited last January, of which I wrote you. Here I saw one of the wives of Momolu whom I met on my vacation. She is now the wife of another big man there, and is with child by him. I went to visit her. The poor woman has leprosy, and part of her hand and foot have been eaten away by the disease. Her husband is an old man and has about ten wives who live in several huts.

A mother with her child tied on her back came to see me. She had been suffering from tooth-ache for about a month. I gave her two aspirin tablets; these eased the pain and she slept well. The next morning I gave her a note to take to the Hospital. I saw her start out. With nothing on but a loin cloth, and a little tin of rice on her head for food, she was ready to set out bare-foot along those indescribable African trails walking for two and one-half hours. What a contrast to our easy way of doing things!

Saturday morning I met her in Bolahun, crying. She complained that no one would do anything for her. I gave her two aspirin tablets and saw the chief about her. She was to have the tooth out in the afternoon as no work is done at the hospital Saturday morning. Eight teeth were

pulled out without the use of any pain deadener, and what a relief it was. This morning (Sunday) she came to say good-bye to me. She was so pleased! Her face fairly beamed. She was starting right then for her weary journey back. I felt almost as great a relief as she to know that she was free from pain.

We passed through another town, Boawolahun. As we approached we saw three boys guarding each entrance, every once in a while giving a frightful yell. A little distance from the town we saw all the men gathered in secret conclave. We did not see a woman around and the silence was very deep. We found out the cause. A young married man had gone hunting in the forest not far away. He had tracked, shot at, and wounded a leopard. Thinking the leopard was dead he went to it and the beast sprang on his neck. Then began a fearful struggle in which they both died. The man had been sought for over a month. When found, nothing was left but a little flesh and the bones of them both. The day we arrived they had brought the remains of the man back to his town and the men were all assembled to decide what to do. The shouting of the boys was to warn the women of the town to stay in their huts and utter no sound. Never have I felt a silence so profound. The faces of the men spoke so poignantly of despair and misery. Shortly after, the doors of the huts were opened, the women were told of the tragedy and then the great silence was broken by wailing and lamentation.

The sequel to this is that a relative of the man stopped at the monastery the day after the body was found, and said he was on his way to see if they had discovered any

trace of him—so slowly does news travel in the Bush.

This set the carriers off talking about wild animals, and they gave me the following accounts:

The leopard is held in great fear by the natives. It is the most ferocious of all wild cats, and proves quite an enemy to dogs, goats, and other pets. George Lahai tells how a leopard killed one of his cows almost at the entrance to the monastery. During the rains when food is scarce he dares to come right into the town and carry off any animal within reach. Leopard traps are made out of heavy logs which look like small cabins. A live goat is put in one section, and as the leopard enters the opening a great log falls and blocks his passage.

When a leopard is killed in any of the villages the hunters cover its face and tie a peculiar kind of grass around the body. Then they take it from hut to hut, singing and blowing horns. The inmates of every hut are expected to give something to the hunters in appreciation of what has been done. The killer is never made known.

A group of hunters who live in a baboon-infested area contrived a means of killing these animals. The hunters make a clearing in the forest along the track of the baboons, where they lay down their guns already loaded. The baboons come up, seize the guns, and begin examining and playing with them. Soon some of them accidentally shoot themselves and the others get scared and run off, leaving their dead companions behind them. The hunters then come and take up their booty and guns and return home.

A trader who is living in Masambolahun wandered about in the country hoping to buy kola-nuts. He came

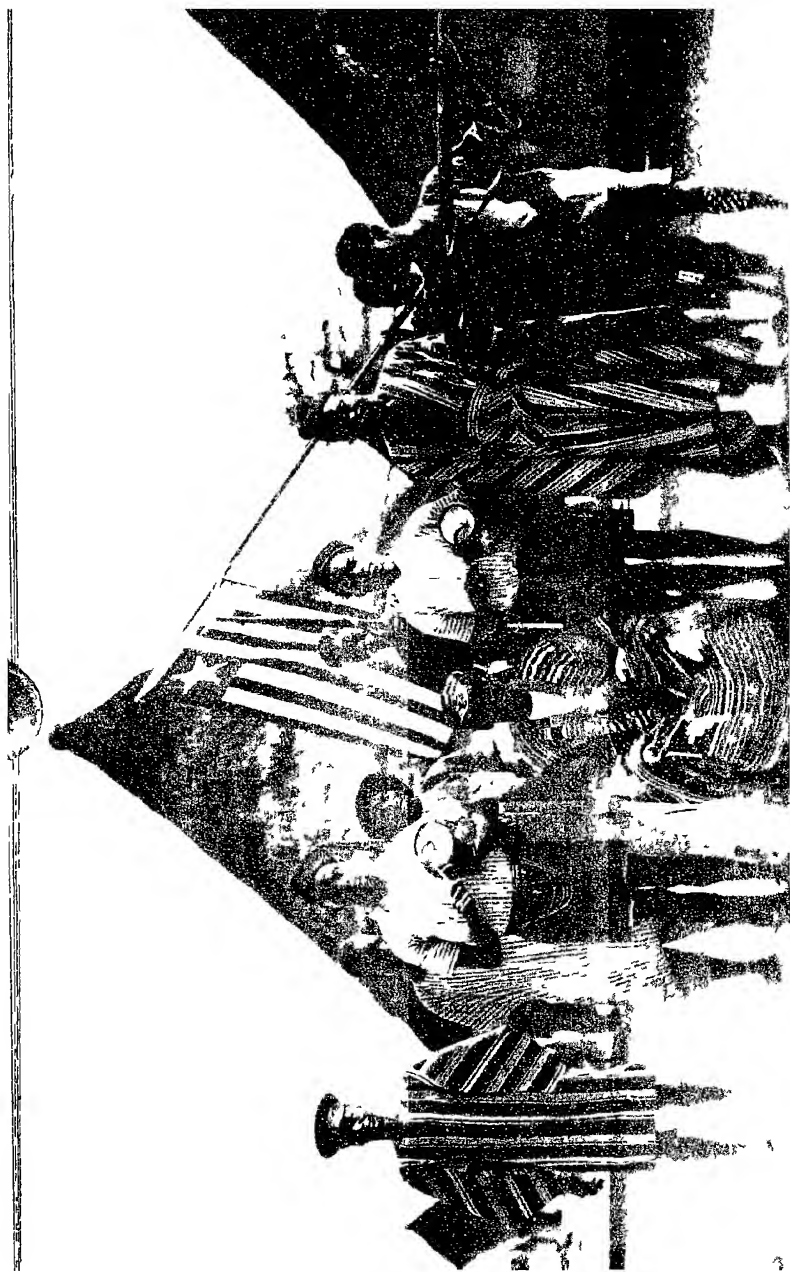
among some savage tribes who had plenty of the commodity which he wanted. The people were pleased with the medium of exchange, which consisted of salt and tobacco brought by the trader, but were very excited by the fact that his legs were so fat. They kept feeling his legs and saying something which seemed to make them happy. The trader observed that their mouths began to water. So leaving his hat, coat, and umbrella and asking leave to look around the town, he quickly made his way out of the neighborhood!

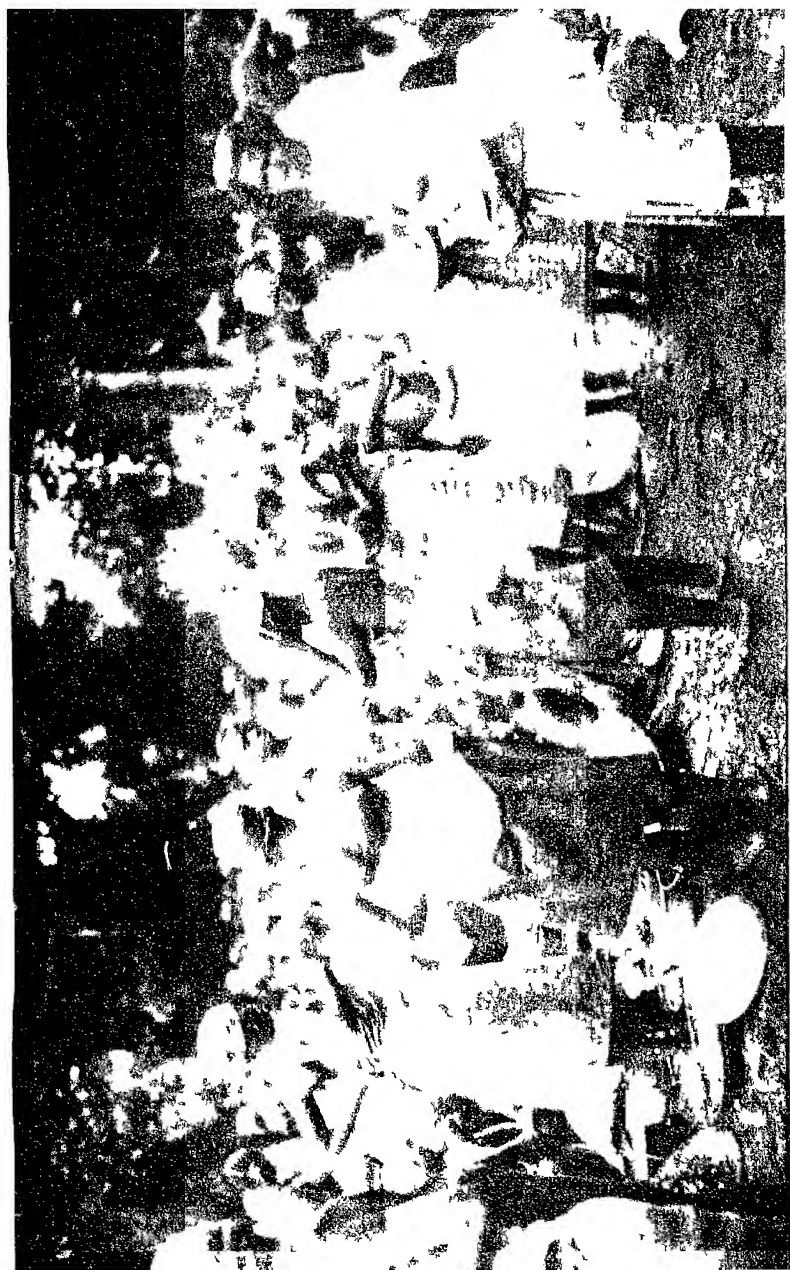
Recently one of the missionaries was preaching in a town with the aid of an interpreter, and the subject of the instruction was "The Ten Lepers." During the lesson he noticed the people smiling, and as he knew some of the dialect he pricked up his ears and was startled to hear the evangelist speak of "The Ten Leopards!"

The first white woman in this part of the country was the cause of much discussion as to whether she had the same kind of feet as the natives, due to the high-heeled shoes she wore. They were sure she had a bone in the shape of a peg which fitted into the heel, and nothing would convince them until her shoe was removed!

Elephants are numerous in the dense forests. Towns which are in or near the forests are sometimes visited by them and a great deal of damage is done to the native plantations. Hunters have killed elephants in the forests for years, and a great deal of ivory used to be exported from Liberia. But now-a-days either the hunters are too timid in hunting them or the elephants are becoming more and more scarce as very little ivory is exported.









- 20 -

Fofi our Paramount Chief is dead! He died last night and gloom has settled down on the inhabitants of his chieftdom. No one knows how old he was. He himself could not have told but he would have made a guess by remembering the number of farming seasons. We could judge his age as being well past seventy-five, which is a remarkable age for a person in the Bush in Africa. Fofi told me that there was only one other man in all that section as old as he and that one lived in Koihemba.

In the morning Frederick Kongoma, myself, and a couple of schoolboys went to pay our respects. As we came near the wives' huts in the town we could hear them wailing and crying out—each one trying (it seemed) to outdo the other in making known her grief. Outside one hut sat Fofi's brother Fomba and the head men of the town. We sat down with them, and the noise and emotion increased so much that one boy threw himself out of the hut onto the ground in convulsions. After a while we were asked if we wished to see the corpse, and we were taken into the hut where a few days ago I had seen him sitting in his hammock. We saw the body covered with a cloth and an old woman sitting nearby to chase away the flies.

The natives flocked to Masambolahun from far and near. The various chiefs all came dressed up in their finest domangi bringing their bands and gifts for the wives and children of Fofi. Many dances were started in order to

distract the grief of his friends. A "dash" of five pounds was made by the Mission. After the Mohammedan services an immense grave was dug at the entrance to the town. In one side a cave was made, somewhat as in the Egyptian custom, and the body placed in this. Before filling the grave we were invited to come nearer and have a last look. Then a detachment of soldiers fired a volley of shot. A fence was built around the grave to keep animals out. At a certain time afterwards a big feast will be held to indicate the end of the period of mourning.

Fofi had been a great warrior in his day. His tribe made war on weaker tribes and took many captives. Then they were given the option of becoming slaves or being killed. Great numbers preferred death; their throats were slashed or they were speared. The slaves could not be sold, but they were used in whatever work they could do. Fofi has had so many wives he cannot number them. He believes he has had about seventy-four children.

The town Bolahun owes its origin to his grandfather Sickli. Sickli belonged to the great Gola Society. For a member of the Society to break one of the rules meant certain death. He was unfortunate enough to break a rule, so, hearing that his death was being plotted, he fled the country and came to the Bandi section which was quite near here. Saibo, who was the chief of the town where he stayed, had a son. Sickli also had a son. These two boys were playing a game one day and a "palaver" started. Sickli was a great warrior and had brought much spoil to him. The palaver was heard by the Paramount Chief who persuaded him to stay. As is customary in a palaver Sickli "begged" him (i. e. he touched the ground

in great humility) and after receiving one woman as wife the matter was settled. The name of this woman was Jasambulu, "Mbulu" meaning "united." The husband settled at Mumbu and made a big town. The wife built huts quite near and this took the name of Masambolahun.

One night Jasambulu went fishing some distance down the stream. She thought it a fine place to have a hut and so built one. After a while she went to live there and named the place Bolahun. Jasambulu became rich by getting people around her and setting them to work. The products of her labors she took to her husband who sold them to the Paramount Chief. Some of the money came back to the wife who used it to help people in trouble. If they could not pay she had them work for her, and in time the town grew and she became a powerful woman. When Sickli and Jasambulu died, their enemies made war on the town and destroyed it. So when the present site was given for the Mission, Fofi thought it best to name it Bolahun after his grandfather.

When the town of Bolahun was reestablished many natives were afraid to live there because lightning often struck the mountains, and they were sure that the evil spirits of Jasambulu were taking vengeance on the new inhabitants. On examination it was found that the surrounding mountains were full of iron and so acted as natural lightning conductors. Even today, no one would think of climbing a certain one of the mountains. If you speak of it you are told the devil lives there and no one is allowed up.

Iron is smelted practically all over Liberia. Here in the interior it is smelted from the abundant ironstone; and



the huge ant-hills of which I spoke in a previous letter are generally made use of as furnaces. The saliva of the ants gives the soil great cogency and strength. The soil from these hills provides excellent material for the making of bricks which when dried become as hard as cement.

Every large town has a blacksmith shop where swords, money, knives, cutlasses, and mattocks are made. The forge usually consists of two stones between which the fire is built, and two iron barrels for the air, attached to a pair of bellows made of goat skin or banana leaves.

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It was a great treat to go to Freetown, Sierra Leone, in September. After a long stay in the Bush it was as exciting as preparing for an ocean voyage. Freetown is about 308 miles from Bolahun. After an eight hours' trek it is necessary to take a lorry for two hours. Never shall I forget the thrill of that ride, in spite of sitting on a hard seat and bouncing along at the rate of 35 per! It was the first time I had seen a car in almost two years and the first touch with a civilized section of the country. If you want to experience the thrill of motoring, keep away from a car for a long time.

The native from the Bush has very little chance of riding on the train because of the cost. So everytime we travel to Freetown we take a new boy to see the sights. It is interesting to watch the reactions of one of them as he sees all the marvels of civilization for the first time. It is all so bewildering and his lack of English prevents him from giving voice to his emotions. I have noticed when one of them returns from such a trip that he talks quite volubly to his friends of the greatness of the white man. When James Willei saw a steamer for the first time he exclaimed, "Oh, white man he is very smart."

We took a dozen cocoanuts (costing a penny each) back to Bolahun. These were distributed amongst the boys and girls. Oh, what a treat! I was besieged for days afterwards for cocoanuts. My only regret is that I did not bring a hundred. Cocoanuts are not ordinarily grown in



the territory where we are and many natives have never seen one. Cocconut palms flourish abundantly on the coast.

When we came back to Bo I called on my Roman Catholic priest friend, Fr. MacDonald, whom I met on my first trip up. He was most cordial and insisted that I give up my reservation in the Rest House and stay at the Mission for the night. This I decided to do. He had an excellent meal prepared and though he had only one bed he gladly gave that up to me while he slept in the sacristy. My boy was to lodge with his cook. He also provided a good lunch to take with me.

On our way back from Freetown with Sister Hilary of the Community of the Holy Name and a new recruit for the Mission, we stopped at Canossa for lunch. We tried hard to get some rice for chop for the carriers but succeeded in getting very little. The town is about three hours' journey from Bolahun.

We had finished lunch and were preparing to start on our journey when a great crying and lamentation pierced the air. We went to the edge of the town to see what it was all about. Just then we met a procession coming from the farm. The captive came first with a rope around his waist preceding his captor—so it proved to be—all the women from the farm, and lastly a wounded man being carried in a hammock. As they came into town the natives saw the blood and joined their crying with the chorus, at the same time rolling on the ground, some actually grovelling in abject misery. The wounded man was brought to the palaver-house and laid on the floor. He had been shot in an accident by a hunter who mistook him

for an animal in the bush. The shot was one of those grape-shot discharges. Several were in his chest and the most serious in his arm. The man seemed to be in a dying condition. Sister Hilary, who has had hospital experience, felt his heart and it was a good strong beat.

④ We saw the chief and he gave orders to get ready to carry him to the hospital. As we waited the time seemed interminable and every minute counted. We had no drugs or anything as our loads had gone on ahead. Someone got palm-wine and gave him a drink. While all this anguish and suspense was going on the man calmly got up and walked out of the palaver-house and got himself ready for the trip. At last the procession was formed and we started, the people still shouting and crying and clinging to us, beseeching us to save his life. The man is a big, massive, well-built fellow. He was carried in a four-man hammock for about two hours. As we met people on the way they started their unearthly yelling and rolling on the ground, which also occurred in the various towns we passed through.

The weeping and wailing and grovelling is to show how sorry they are for the unfortunate one. If you grovel on the ground and cover yourself with mud your sympathy is very great. When we came to a particularly rocky section the "dying" man got out of the hammock and started leading the procession! We had sent a messenger ahead to tell the doctor of his coming. The doctor took out some pieces of the metal and the man pulled one piece out by himself. The man who did the shooting has been fined the task of providing food for his victim.

One should venture into one's kitchen with reluctance

in Africa. It is certainly a case where ignorance is bliss. The wife of a missionary was quite bold and went into her kitchen as the evening meal was being prepared. The dessert was an English plum-pudding which required boiling in a cloth. She was horrified to see that the cook had used one of her husband's socks! She remonstrated with him and he replied, "Well, Missi, it was only one of his dirty socks."

As everyone knows, a chicken's liver is a most delectable morsel and the African knows this also. Our cook was in the habit of keeping it for himself until one of the mission staff, who had a weakness for chicken livers, told him that hereafter he should cook the whole chicken. So the next time chicken was on the bill-of-fare, Sori, the cook, did just as he was told and cooked and prepared to serve the chicken whole, feathers and all! Naturally this caused a little stir in camp.

Here are some proverbs in current use among the Kissi which my friends Andrew Popei and Thomas Koli have interpreted.

1. A wandering dog eats no scraps from the table.
The proverb seems similar to ours. "A rolling stone gathers no moss."
2. An old man who knows how to amuse people will never die of starvation.
Since many of the old folks in Africa are garrulous, fault-finding, and are never satisfied, this proverb has a very wide application.
3. An oily hand does not get wet.
A rich man or one with influential friends can keep out of palavers.

4. A stingy man has no servants.
5. A crippled leper climbs no palm tree.
Don't attempt the impossible.
6. You don't lick a dry hand.
You can't squeeze water out of a stone. Since the native Africans eat with their hands, this refers to their licking their fingers after eating.
7. A monkey who won't learn to climb will have to eat unripe fruit.
If a man won't learn a trade he won't have the best things in life.
8. An angry hill gets no sacrifices.
It is the belief among the Kissi that the souls of the departed live in certain hills. On these hills sacrifices are offered from time to time. If the spirits won't be appeased by the sacrifices and keep their people out of trouble, then they will stop making sacrifices. So a man in this world who is short tempered won't have people giving him gifts.
9. An interfering person is never free from palavers.
This means that if you are always trying to talk in others' palavers you will soon get into trouble yourself.

These are from the Vai Tribe:

1. Softly, softly, catch monkey.
Intended to encourage patience.
2. The mother crab to the baby crab—"Why don't you walk straight?"
Baby crab to mother—"I walk the same way you do."
This is an African version of "A chip off the old block."



— 22 —

EXCITEMENTS are coming quick and fast these days. What terrors and fears, mysterious powers, hopes and longings for morning the night holds! Insignificant and unnoticeable things assume gigantic proportions. Who has not waked up in terror in the dark hours of the night? If it be true that the things we are afraid of are the things we do not know, then think how the native is controlled by the unknowable. One does not have to teach the native about good and bad spirits, they are too real in his daily life.

Suddenly the other night a scream of terror filled the air. I woke up and lay listening to the din. It lasted for some time and then quieted down. Just as the dawn broke the schoolboys were up, jabbering in excited tones. I could hardly keep from breaking the Great Silence to find out what it was all about. The excitement continued until the time for the Chapel Service. They are usually quiet and recollected at this hour, but this morning as they stood in line and walked to Chapel the boys were all upset. One of the prefects told me that in the night Popei had been awakened by a spirit. He made the sign of the Cross and banged his head on the bed, and suddenly jumped up screaming that the spirit was after him. This started all the other boys in the Kissi hut yelling out in terror. It was useless to tell them there was no spirit. Before going into Chapel all the boys went to the grave of a man who had been buried two days ago to see if they

could find the hole in the grave where the spirit had come out.

A few weeks ago a woman patient in the hospital died and was buried in the Chapel cemetery. The day after burial the chief and his head-men came to the doctor in great distress and asked him to open up her grave as they wished to drive a stake through her body so that she could not get out. They said she came to the town during the night and took the men by the throat and shook them. The doctor said, "I'll fix that." "I've got some strong woman medicine here." So he mixed up some of his bitterest concoction and told each man to drink of it, which they did. They left the hospital quite contented and the woman never bothered them again.

Yesterday morning a poisonous snake was seen making its way to one of the school dormitories. Shouts of "Kaali" ("snake" in Bandi) filled the air. "It's coming into the hut!" One of our biggest boys, Charles Kekla, six feet two, was there. He jumped through the window and struck his head against the frame, cutting a big gash in his head. He came to the monastery with blood streaming down his face.

Snakes abound in Liberia, of which about ten species are poisonous, though it is remarkable how very seldom any death is reported from snake-bite. We recall the tragedy of dear old Momo Koli who was bitten by a snake and died. His death caused an uproar in the town the morning afterwards. Momo was a Christian and was given a Christian burial and buried in the Church cemetery. Early in the morning an excited meeting of the townspeople gathered in the palaver-house. They were filled

with terror lest some great evil would befall them because his heathen friends had placed an old tin can on the grave to propitiate Momo's spirit, and the can had disappeared during the night.

There are varieties of tree-climbing snakes. I remember the excitement caused by one up in a tree on the monastery compound. The native men could not rest until they had chased it out and killed it.

One species of these tree cobras is noted for its fierce disposition. They will frequently attack human beings unprovoked, this fury being probably connected with the breeding season. Males and females are extremely attached when they have paired, and either of them will attack a human being if it thinks that the life of the other is in danger. Pythons attain an enormous size, some measuring twenty feet in length. The longest I have seen was one killed near the school compound, twelve feet long.

Two snakes found a resting place under my bed! They had evidently been attracted there by frogs which come inside the house after cockroaches.

The natives of the surrounding towns are hastening to Masambolahun, the scene of many festivities these days. The women's Poru Society, corresponding to the men's Devil Society, is coming from the Bush School. It is an unbroken law that every native boy and girl must join these societies, go into the Bush, and be eaten up by the devil until the initiation and teaching are over. If boys or girls die during their session it is made known to their parents by a bunch of leaves found at the door of the hut next morning. When the school is finished the devil spews them out of his mouth and they come back to their

towns, where a big celebration is given them by the people, with dancing and eating and great rejoicing.

The Bush Schools are to teach the mysteries of life and how to take one's full share in community affairs. Of course the "social amenities" of dancing are taught. Some of the best pupils are taken out for exhibition dancing. So, armed with an umbrella I proceeded to the "ball." It was in the center of the town, in the broiling sun. I stood there for some time and was sent for by the chief to come and sit on a chair by him.

The women's "orchestra" was sitting on the ground in the shade under the eaves of a hut. The comely young dancers had on short colored skirts held up by straps; a black sunburst studded with brass on their heads, and on the arms sheaves of dried grass which swept the ground sending up a cloud of dust filling the nostrils, eyes and ears. The dancers were from different branches of the Society and whenever one of their dancers did a stunt the cheer leaders of their side let out a whoop. I bought twelve irons for threepence. The prompter of the dancers—also part of the musical band—was a big tall woman and was so dominating I am afraid I looked at her more than at the dancers. I quickly sent two irons to her. She did not know how to take the compliment but decided to take the irons!

A schoolboy took two irons to each of the dancers and offered them, but they would not take them, since the irons have to be thrown on the ground while some woman of their section comes and carries them off. One must never sit with legs crossed while watching a dance; if one does it spoils the "medicine" and the dancers will fall down.

I unconsciously crossed mine and the chief told me to uncross them. A few minutes afterwards a dancer did fall down and the schoolboy said, "See, someone crossed his legs and spoiled the medicine." I was thankful not to be charged with the tragedy.

The Pied Piper of Hamelin would find a lot to do here. When the rats of Hamelin went into the sea, they surely must have swum the ocean and landed in Africa. Lean rats, fat rats, gray rats, all are here. In the beginning of my sojourn I could not sleep because of them. I used to see them going down the screen door from the attic as soon as it got dark and when the day broke saw them climbing up to the garret, heard them land on the floor with a thud and scamper away.

Last night I dreamed an octopus was climbing the wall. I woke up and heard this thing climb up the screen and fall down with a bang, bouncing against the bed, and then on the shelf knocking down bottles. It acted like a frog or a snake. I got up and lit the lamp but could see nothing; then went to bed again, yet the noise began once more. Soon I saw a big rat outlined against the screen. When I arose nothing could be seen of him.

About eight o'clock I went to take my helmet, when lo and behold there was the rat inside! The hat dropped quickly and the rat ran up the bookcase and disappeared behind some books. I called one of the house boys to come and get it. He grabbed hold and it bit his finger, making the blood run. After much chasing, the rat was finally hit on the head with a shoe.

Last night I went to Nyokoetahun where the Clan Chief lives for "God Palaver." We went to his hut to pay

our respects. I said to him, "Well, Hena, what's the news?" To which he gave me the invariable reply, "No bad news." Well, isn't there any good news?" "Yes," said he, "I've got two new wives." "How many will that make?" "Twelve." "If each of them presents you with six children you'll have quite a family." "Pray for me that each one will give me that number." He replied with a twinkle.

Chiefs acquire their wives by paying the bride-price, which varies in different sections of the country. Girls or women are given to chiefs as presents. For instance if a man wants to win a chief's favor he will present him with a daughter or a niece. The gift of a woman is made by men who are deeply in debt and so hope to get out of their difficulties by becoming a father-in-law to the chief. By accepting their offer the chief takes over all their obligations, while on the other hand the man and his family become in a certain way dependent on their chief.

Having many wives often establishes a chief's prestige and gives him much comfort. Three or four wives constantly wait upon the chief; the head-wife, the cooking-wife who is responsible for his meals, the travelling-woman who accompanies her husband on his journeys, and the sala-woman, who keeps away evil influences, accompanying him everywhere, carrying his charm-box.

Nor does the possession of many wives, of necessity, indicate bad morals from the native point of view. It is a social economic matter. The man with many wives is looked up to in the country, and so far from jealousy existing amongst the women, they desire their husbands to have as many wives as possible for two reasons: in the first place, it divides the labor and makes it easier for

everyone; and in the second place, the woman who is wife to a man with a large harem, enjoys a social prestige which nothing else can give her, especially if she is the head-wife, or senior in point of nuptials. In the latter case, the younger women submit to her rule, which is rarely exercised harshly.

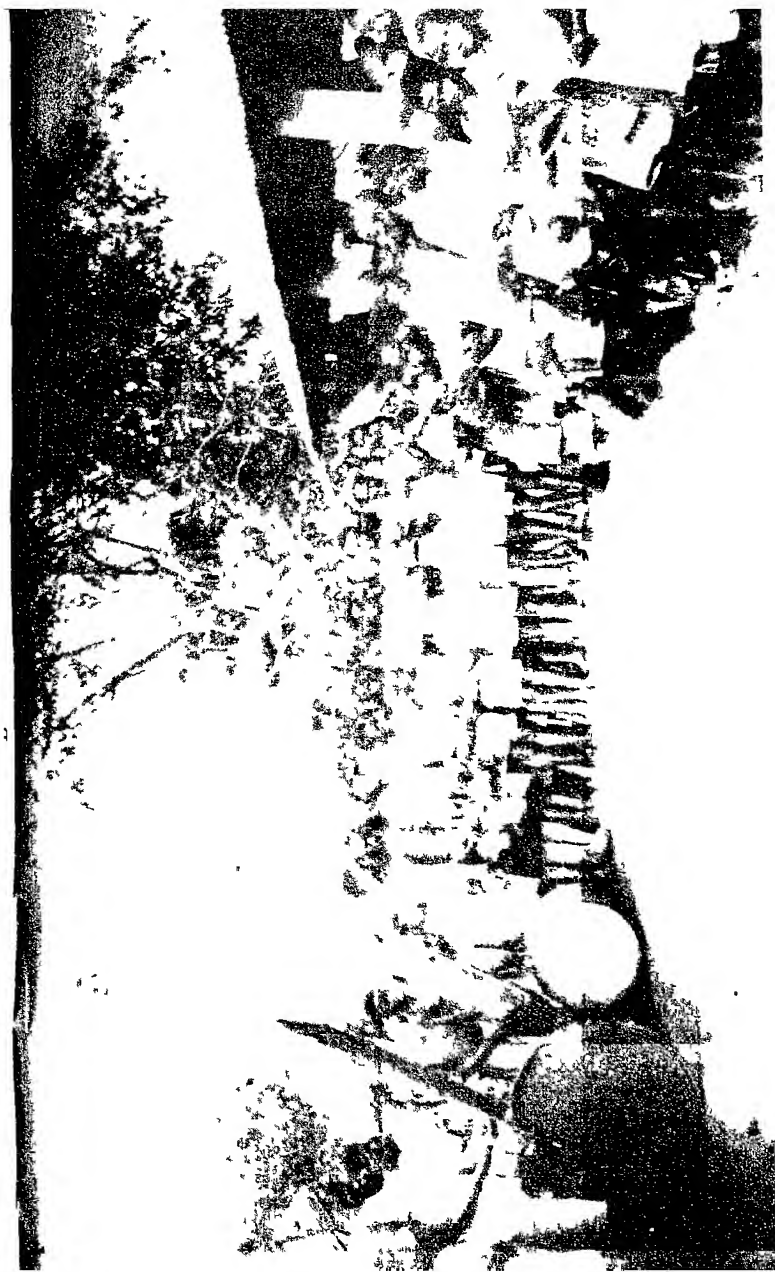
When the husband with many wives and children dies, his eldest brother takes his place and enters into possession of the household.

Holy Thursday I started out to preach the Passion in Kpangihemba. We had to cross the Kaiha River. When we reached the other side we saw a crocodile about four feet long sunning himself on a rock. In this section it is against the native law to kill them. One of the men threw a rock and struck it right on the back making it kick up its four legs and then settle down. We kept throwing stones but it would not move. Not until a boy went quite close did the crocodile decide to go along. We were going for a swim but after this thought it best not to do so.

We arrived at the town about a quarter of five in the afternoon, after travelling through one of the worst trails I have yet experienced. In the hut we found a plague of driver-ants. After lighting a fire all over the floor we finally got rid of them. The natives filled the palaver-house to overflowing for the preaching. Surely no one had a more attentive congregation. We spoke to them about keeping a fast. They said they would gladly keep that and would also try to remain in silence. Easter Day fifteen people came to Church walking in a pouring rain for two hours from this town. Their devotion and simple faith puts one to shame.







The T. v. Band on a State Occasion



Yesterday—a beautiful clear day—the Easter picnic was held with great rejoicing. It was at the Kaiha River. The journey was a good hour and a half away. Goat was the “*pièce de résistance*” supplemented by two freshly killed monkeys, which had been shot by the schoolboys. One monkey was cut up into about seventy parts and given to the boys. Some took their portion, stuck it on a stick and put the choice morsel into the fire, roasted it and ate it as an “*entrée*” before the meal. Others wrapped their share in a leaf and put it into their pockets to be used to make soup at some future date. Besides being shot, monkeys are caught in a native monkey trap, made by cutting down trees to form a sort of bridge between two neighboring clumps and placing a noose in such a way that monkeys, passing along the fallen trunks to reach the opposite group of trees, will put their heads through the noose and be captured. They are easily tamed and make interesting pets.

The day was hot and the water so tempting that Dr. Heydorn and I could not resist going in for a swim, much to the delight of the boys. It was not easy to swim with a helmet on, which kept coming off and floating away on the water. A good time was had by all. It was a day to be remembered; one of those days which stand out long in one’s memory.

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HENRY FALLA did not return to school from his town and on enquiry we found out that he was sick. We tried repeatedly without success to get the boys to go and bring him to the hospital for treatment.

After two weeks, during which time all kinds of native medicines were used, he arrived at the doctor's house one night, just dragging himself along. Dr. Fowler examined him and found that he had an advanced stage of pneumonia. Henry was put straight to bed in the hospital and the next day his lungs were tapped, when a quart bottle of fluid was removed. He hung between life and death for several days. I spent a lot of time with him, and it gave me a good opportunity to see the hospital in operation.

Here are some of the facts I learned in talking to Dr. Fowler, and also what I observed.

One witnesses the most heartrending sights as he sees the line of patients on the days they come to get their appalling sores and ulcers dressed, and their yaws injections given.

One day 1,270 were in line, waiting their turn with the most pathetic patience. Of these over 400 were new cases. They come hobbling in on sticks and rude crutches, or are brought by their friends, and laid on mats. They represent all degrees of terrible infection, and their appearance is awful in the extreme. There is nothing that remotely compares with it in any country of Europe or in

America. The ravages of yaws is fearful, not infrequently sloughing off great sections of the face and limbs. What this disease is no one seems to know. It seems closely akin to syphilis, but the investigators are not prepared to say that it is venereal in character. Our doctors have estimated that one-half of the Kissi nation, which is the largest in this part of Africa, is, or has been, infected with it. Many children have it, but outgrow it. Along the trails or in the towns you see numbers of people with wide, white blotches on their skin, showing where it has healed, leaving its marks behind. Happily, it is susceptible to treatment, and some seven injections of a bismuth preparation are sufficient, ordinarily, to stop it. There is a recent combination of the same drug which works a cure after three injections.

The tragic part of the business is, however, that great numbers of these foolish people will take part of the treatment, and stop coming as soon as the cure goes far enough to give them relief from actual pain. They imagine that they are well, and no insistence to the contrary on the part of the hospital authorities has any effect. The consequence is that in a month or two they are worse off than before, and turn up in the line again, the entire treatment having to be repeated. This waste makes a serious inroad on the time of the workers and on the hospital funds, and all to no purpose.

The ulcers are beyond description. I have seen a man carried in to the table in the arms of an orderly, so thin and emaciated as a result of infection that he seemed to have scarcely the weight of a child. Sometimes the great, inflamed space will cover the entire leg, from hip to knee,

raw and bloody-looking. Another prevalent disease is elephantiasis which causes enormous swellings. Tropical tumors are common.

The tragic and baffling thing about all these diseases is that the people, even the most intelligent of them, seem not to have the slightest idea of the necessity of avoiding contagion. They never fall into a panic about disease. A man with a bad case of small-pox will crawl about the town as long as he can keep on his feet, and no one minds in the least. I have seen a mother in the line at the hospital, nursing a baby at a breast which was covered with open yaws sores, and it never occurred to her that the child was almost certain to catch the infection. Even those in advanced stages of leprosy eat out of the same dish and drink out of the same cup, like the rest of the family, and it never so much as occurs to anyone to make a protest.

The greatest gift that could be made to the African in his present stage of civilization would be that of a highly developed germ complex. But in order for him to be endowed with such a complex the prodigious task of revising his entire outlook on nature must be undertaken. He has no conception of natural cause and effect, so far as disease or accident is concerned. If that child contracted yaws from his mother's breast, or leprosy from some infected kinsman out of whose rice-bowl he ate, the only thought in the mother's mind would be that someone had put a spell on her baby, or that some evil spirit was afflicting him.

Certain days in the hospital are devoted to operations, but such is the need that a rapid surgeon could be kept busy many more days. Tumors are exceedingly common.

Dreadful as the tropical variety is, if taken in time cures can be effected. Hernia is the most common complaint which calls for the use of the knife. Hundreds of cases fill the country. They arise, of course, from the fact that the people are all engaged in heavy labor, large numbers of the men being carriers, who travel for an eight-hour day with a load of sixty pounds on their heads.

Umbilical hernia is common in these parts, caused by the horrid practice of severing the umbilical cord at the birth of a child, not with a knife, nor even with the saw-edge of a blade of jungle grass, as they do in the Congo, but by giving it a sharp jerk so as to break it. It is very usual to see amongst the little naked children who run about the towns, many with a navel projecting three or four inches in front of their stomachs, and as big as your fist. No one seems to think of it as a deformity, or that it calls for any remark.

This morning a little girl came into the hospital compound bringing two old men, both of whom were blind. She had been leading them to the hospital for six days and nights, stopping at the towns to beg their food. How beautifully does this illustrate the quotation "a little child shall lead them." The two men are getting treatment, and the girl is waiting to take them back to their town.

Another patient who had had a large growth between his legs for some years was operated upon and the growth cut away. When he saw what had been cut off he shook his fist at it and said, "All these years you humbug me and now the doctor humbug you."

Among these natives there is a remarkable absence of

nerves and of imagination, so far as surgical treatment is concerned. They are totally devoid of fear of the operating-table. Awaiting their turn for the most serious major operations, they smile and without any apparent apprehension. They never have to be reasoned with concerning the necessity of submitting to the knife. The doctor's opinion is accepted with as glad and willing a mind as if he had recommended an aspirin tablet. Many operations are performed with local anaesthetics, and I have heard of only one case where a patient fainted under the process. He often watches the proceedings with deep interest and with practically no nervous reaction. Some time ago, the doctor was performing an abdominal operation, when a small shack in the hospital compound caught fire. On hearing the alarm, he stopped for a few moments, and went to the door to see if anything serious was happening. On turning back, to his amazement he found that the patient had got off the table and followed him out to enjoy the excitement, with his intestines exposed. He seemed to think the doctor's consternation at what he had done to be quite amusing, as though he were equal to that kind of thing any day in the week.

I think I wrote you a little while ago that little maternity work is done at the hospital, and for a very interesting reason. These native women, in common with nearly all African mothers, bear their children with extraordinary ease, with little pain, and with practically none of the resultant exhaustion which is universal among civilized folk. Some months ago the wife of one of the workmen, who was cooking at the hospital, feeling her time approaching, walked a quarter of a mile to the river

and gave birth to her baby. Then she washed and brought it back to the compound—all within the space of an hour or two.

Ordinarily at childbirth one of the native midwives helps, and receives in payment whatever she can get—a few irons, some rice, or a little cloth.

There is much to be observed here which illustrates the absence of a sense of compassion among pagan folk. The people are kindly and hospitable, but there is little emotion of pity in their hearts. They are devoted to their own families, and there is a kind of civic obligation to help those of their own clan. As one travels around the towns there are few cases of mental deficiency to be found, and still fewer of insanity. We are told that it is not because mental defectives do not occur, or that men and women do not lose their reason. But such unfortunates are neglected, and soon find relief in death. A child who proves to be seriously defective is, in many instances, practically left to starve.

I have been much interested in a little girl in the town whom we found a year or two ago in an adjoining village. She was evidently little more than an idiot, half-starved, reduced to skin and bones, and covered with sores. Her people had practically abandoned her. If she could find a few scraps of food that had been thrown away she might partially appease her hunger, but few gave anything to her, and nobody cared. Her feet were in dreadful condition from jigger infection, and she walked with great difficulty. We arranged with the chief of the town to take charge of her, and he brought her in his arms across the country to the hospital, where she was treated until she

recovered her strength and her horrid sores were healed. She now lives in the town, properly cared for by one of our native women, who is paid a shilling a week to look after her. Her people seem never to give her a thought. Nor is she a dull, stupid child, but bright and cheerful, with that appeal which is made so powerfully by the sweetness of spirit and temper which often marks those whose mental development has been arrested.

One day passing through a town I saw a youngster seized with an epileptic fit. He lay foaming in the road, but no native ran to help him.

There is in the hospital now, a man from a town not far away whose chief took him into the forest to procure some palm-wine. This wine is obtained by climbing the tall trunk of the tree, boring a hole in the soft wood just under the spring of the fronds, and inserting a long bamboo cane to receive the sap. Such a piece of bamboo, thirty to forty feet long and several inches in diameter, will contain several gallons of sap, which after a few days ferments into a wine of fairly intoxicating quality.

The ascent is made by placing a hoop or belt about the tree and settling oneself within it, using it as a seat, while the bare feet propel the climber up the trunk. He is thus supported by the hoop which he takes along with him, by giving it a series of sharp jerks as he ascends. It is dangerous business, and a not uncommon and fatal accident in these parts is the breaking of the hoop, which precipitates the unfortunate climber to the ground, often a distance of sixty or seventy feet.

This is just what happened to the poor fellow who now lies in the hospital, except that in falling, he was

impaled through the fleshy part of the thigh on the sharp, slender stump of a dead frond, and hung suspended in agony some twenty-five feet from the ground.

At this juncture came the almost incredibly pitiless thing. The chief, angered because he did not get his wine, went away and left him to die in slow torture. Fortunately, some of the man's people heard of his plight, and came to his rescue. In their awkward efforts to release him, however, they let him fall to the ground, and his arm was broken. He was hurried to the hospital, where the doctor took a quantity of splinters from his leg, and set the arm. There seemed not one chance in ten of saving him death from lockjaw, but with the marvelous recuperative power possessed by primitive people, he is making a good recovery.



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WHAT price vanity? It is in all peoples, though it takes different forms; the white, with their faces painted and fine clothes; the black of Africa with long heads, disked lips and earrings, the marks on body and face (sometimes the whole body covered with an intricate design), and the beads which are worn by every woman as waist-bands in this part of Africa.

Saturday morning, one of the schoolboys, Mollu, came to the Monastery sobbing as if his heart would break. He said his sister had been burned very badly and taken to the hospital. For some reason she did not wish to follow her husband, so, meeting her father at Kolahun, she went with him to Kpagbalamai. There had been quite an influx of strangers, and she was lodged in one of the chief's wives' huts which was already over-crowded; so much so that she had to sleep on a mat on the floor with the other women. She lay down to sleep close to the fire, it being quite cool that evening. All the covering she had on was her cover-cloth, and 14 rows of beads made of black celluloid, about three-eighths of an inch in diameter, interspersed with big red beads. During the night while she slept, the edge of the cloth caught fire, which also set fire to another woman's cloth. These set fire to the beads which burned like gasoline. The two women sprang up and screamed in terror and agony, and broke the strings of beads which fell to their feet, horribly burning their whole bodies. They were brought to the hospital, but it was

too late for one, Mollu's sister. She died early Sunday morning. The doctor did all he could. The other one is still alive and may get well.

This is evidently not the first time a thing like this has happened, for in Sierra Leone there is a law against wearing celluloid beads. It is things like this which wring one's heart.

The two strangest things I have had to do in the Religious Life are painting a coffin, and taking care of a month's old baby while its guardian went to a funeral.

A Sierra Leone woman came to the hospital for treatment some weeks ago. She was sick a long time and finally died. It was necessary to bury her the same day. As she was a civilized woman, her son and daughter wanted to give her a fairly decent funeral. The carpenter and many assistants were hastily sent for and given the task of making a coffin. The funeral was to be at four in the afternoon. I went to the carpenter's shop to see how they were coming along. The workers were just putting the finishing touches to the coffin. Someone had obtained an old sheet for a lining; someone else a little varnish which was being put on with a half-inch brush. I suggested getting a piece of paper, dipping it in the varnish, and smearing it on. It worked, and several of us got busy and finished the job. We then ransacked the monastery garden for flowers. It was a rather pathetic procession to the church-yard where she was buried. The mourners awaited the coffin at the grave, and the carriers, realizing they were late, tried their best to run, which did not add to solemnity. The pathetic sight of it all brought tears to Heydorn's eyes.

I did not attend the funeral but stayed home to take care of Mildred Fowler's (our doctor's wife) black charge—a baby which had been brought to the hospital by its father after its mother died. I got a suit-case and put the child in that, and began my job as nurse-maid until the return of the mourners.

Yesterday at the school's closing exercises, there were all kinds of mixed emotions; joy and gladness, disappointment and anger, and "weeping and gnashing of teeth." The examinations were given about three weeks ago. It brought out some startling results from some boys. Every time the teachers were met the great question was, "Did I pass?" "If I pass I shall dance too much!" We were afraid to give out any results of markings for fear some of the boys would run away. It is amazing the serious attitude the boys take towards their examinations when you think that they are people who have been held down so much. I asked one of my big boys what was on his mind and he said, "Plenty." "My examinations are on my mind." "I can't eat or sleep." "It's a very big thing for a boy to fail in our country." However, he failed, but did not have courage enough to turn up for the exercises to hear the results. One boy came to Teacher Manley, asking him not to read out his mark if he failed.

Well, the great day arrived. All the boys were up at the first gleam of dawn talking and jabbering away. One could feel the tenseness in the air. The final touches were put on the decorations of their houses and platforms. The boys were dressed up in their best clothes. Dr. Fowler, who was chairman, prefaced his remarks by saying that those who were to recite or sing had to

stand in front with their backs toward him, and if they did not do well he might be tempted to give them an "injection" with the long needle used at the hospital. So having in mind the needle's potentialities from past experience, this brought out a great laugh. There were the usual "school doings." They sang "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" splendidly—so much so that they were clapped for an encore. The climax and anti-climax came when the marks were read out. Those who passed fairly danced for joy, but the faces of those who failed were a sad sight.

Thomas Koli, the son of a chief at Gelema, the idol of the school (a jovial-faced, stockily built boy, who when he had on his white coat and long pants always put me in mind of a train porter) was one of the graduates. He was sure that he had passed his examinations. In order to have some fun, Mr. Manley was tipped off to read his marks as 62.5%—the passing mark being 65%. Thomas' name was called out and he stood up with great confidence, his face beaming. The whole school could not imagine he would fail. The teacher's voice rang out clear and distinct—62.5%. Poor Thomas felt his legs give way, and a groan went up from the school. Their idol had failed! But it was only momentary. The teacher's voice came again, "O no! It's a mistake! His mark is 75%!" And at that the crowd thundered applause. Their idol had not disappointed them. At the close they were asked to sing "Swing Low" once more, but all the spirit had gone out, and they sang poorly. However, the depression seems to have passed today and all is back to normal. Pictures were taken of the boys, but in spite of the humiliation of those who failed their vanity got the better of them and all posed with their brightest smiles.

Last night about midnight a light shone into my room and I heard voices. So I got up to see what it was, and there stood Town Chief Tufa with a couple of other men. Tufa's child had just died and they had come to get permission to dig a grave and bury him. Infant mortality is very high amongst the natives, and it is certainly only the "survival of the fittest" who live to adult life.

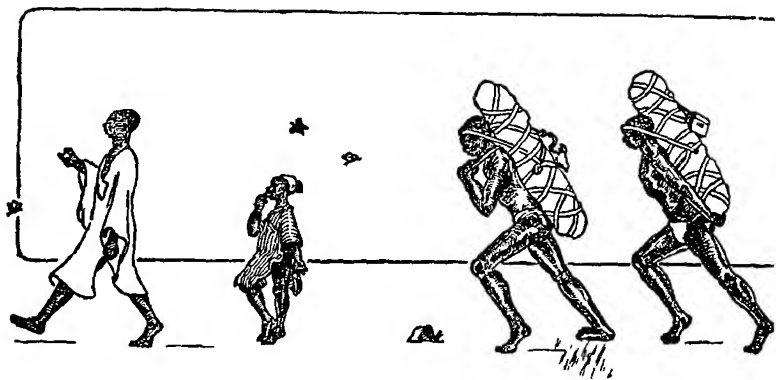
Heydorn has left! He departed this morning to go to Monrovia in response to a special request of the government. He has been in the country for five years and had let his passport run out. He was a member of our Mission family for eighteen months, and as you can imagine he will be missed. We have heard that he is going back to Germany. It almost broke his heart to leave, for Africa and the natives have wound strong cords of love about him. He had four of her sons under his special care—Bokkai, Digei, Vaveli and Bio—providing for them and putting them through school.

Heydorn was a quiet, taciturn fellow and an indefatigable worker on the African languages. He spoke German, French, English, and Vai fluently and had a natural aptitude for study. Four grammars for African languages have been written by him: Vai, Bandi, Buzi and Kissi. It is from the last three grammars that we at the Mission are able to begin an intelligent study of the languages. We have since heard from him. He presented his language studies to a university in Hamburg and was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

African Folklore



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African Folklore

EVERY Thursday afternoon I gave the boys in our class an opportunity for extemporaneous English speaking, calling on every one in turn and the rest taking notes of mistakes which were corrected afterwards. They liked to tell their own country stories and these I chose as the best.

THE AGE OF TOAD, SNAIL AND HORNBILL

There was once a big feast, all the animals came together, and there was dancing for a whole month. On the evening when the feast was to end, three old men entered the town. Their names were Toad, Snail, and Hornbill. When they came everybody wondered, for they had never seen people like them before. No one knew which was the eldest, so they were shown equal respect.

Now one day the Paramount Chief called everyone together to choose a new chief, which caused much unrest

among the people of that district, because they loved their old leader, and they feared that a young man would not respect old people. In those days the oldest men had the greatest power, and it was they who gave commands. So the young man who wanted to become chief went to Toad, told him of his difficulty, gave him a large sum of money, and won him over to his side, thinking that Toad was the eldest of the three. As for Snail and Hornbill, he scorned them. At length the time came for choosing the new chief, and all the older men gathered in the town of the Paramount Chief. Everyone said that Toad, Snail, and Hornbill were older than anyone else, so it was up to them to choose the new chief—for which they would be well paid. Chief Toad laughed and said, "Ha ha! That can't be done—I have never seen that before. Only one man can appoint a chief—and that is he who is the eldest. Therefore it is I who will appoint the chief—I, I, Toad!"

The people said, "That is the business of you three. If Snail and Hornbill agree that you are older than they, you may appoint him; but if they do not agree, you may not appoint him, because no one knows your ages. So it is best for you all to make up your minds and tell us tomorrow evening."

To this Snail and Hornbill agreed, but Toad was unwilling, and shouted, "No! I do not agree at all! If Snail and Hornbill are playing a trick on me, well, we shall see! When we come tomorrow, we will show who is the eldest. You shall hear it all and judge yourselves, and I shall be the first to speak when we have all gathered together again!"

When the three were alone, Hornbill said to Toad,

"We had better leave these goods wrapped up for sale. If we unwrap them, everyone will only laugh instead of buying them, and we shall have troubled ourselves for nothing."

"But Hornbill," Toad answered, "don't you think I am older than you?"

"No, I don't," replied Hornbill.

"All right," said Toad, "I don't want to hear any more. I shall know what to say when the time comes."

And he left them. Up to this time Snail had said nothing.

The next evening, when the meeting again occurred, the three old men were called. They came and took their seats, whereupon the judge asked them, "Are you ready?"

They replied with a shout, "Goo!", meaning, "We have been for some time!"

Turning to Snail, the judge asked, "Snail, can you tell us why you said you were older than Toad or Hornbill?"

"Yes," answered Snail.

"Well, go ahead."

So Snail stood up before them all, and said, "When I was only a little creature God created the earth. At that time the earth was all soft and muddy, and if one should step down hard, he would sink far down beneath it."

At this everyone clapped, saying, "He speaks truly, for Snail always steps slowly and softly." Before this, they had always been puzzled why it was that he walked this way, for it was clear that he wasn't sick at all. So they said, "Truly he is a very old man, for we have never heard this before."

Snail sat down.

Next it was Toad's turn. He arose and said, "When I was small, the whole ground was full of little holes, and one could not walk without jumping. If one wished to walk at all, he had to jump over the holes."

Again there was a great clapping of hands, and the people cried, "Truly you are a very old man—even older than Snail!"

And Toad jumped to his seat, his breast swelling with pride.

Next came Hornbill. As he looked upon the whole meeting, he said, "Of a truth, I am very much older than either Toad or Snail. Long, long ago, when my mother bore me, there was no earth; we just flew, and sought our food in the air. At that time, if any person died, he was buried on his head, because there was no ground. So behold my head! If you do not see my mother's coffin there, then I am lying!"

And lo! it was true—his mother's coffin was lying on top of his head!

Everybody clapped; some even wept with sorrow, saying, "Truly this old man has seen much trouble in his life, and he must indeed be older—far older—than Toad or Snail. So he shall appoint the new chief, and he himself shall be, next to the chief, the foremost man in this land!"

And so it is to this day: Hornbill's mother's coffin rests upon his head to prove his story true; and to this very day Toad does not walk—he hops, just as he did long ago when he was born; and even now Snail walks softly,—softly, and slowly,—as people walked of yore when he was born.

THE WISE ANTELOPE

When Antelope had grown up, he wanted to become a great wise man; and, indeed, he was clever, but he wanted to find out how wise he really was. So he went to a very wise man to learn wisdom. Now the wise man said to him, "Antelope, I want you to do something today."

"What is that?" asked Antelope.

"I want you to catch me a big crocodile."

All laughed as they heard the words of the wise man and said, "How can this little Antelope catch a crocodile?"

But Antelope just smiled and went to the big river, carrying a long, thick bamboo pole as his walking-stick. He hadn't gone far when he saw a big crocodile. As soon as he saw him, he shouted, "Good morning, Uncle Crocodile, how are you?" And he shook hands with the crocodile. While they were enjoying themselves talking, Antelope said, "Uncle Crocodile, we have been having an argument. Someone said that no one could bite this piece of bamboo through, but I think *you* can do it, Uncle Crocodile, because you have long, long teeth. Don't you think you can, Uncle Crocodile?"

Laughingly the crocodile bit into the bamboo with all his might, but his teeth stuck in the bamboo, and he couldn't get them out. "Antelope," he said, "you see my teeth are stuck."

"Oh!" said Antelope, "Try as hard as you can to get your teeth out, Uncle Crocodile! If you can't get them out at all, tell me!"

Once again the crocodile tried with all his strength, but without being able to free his teeth from the bamboo, so



he cried to Antelope, "It's no use! You must help me!"

"Well," replied Antelope, smiling, "we'll have to go to the wise man for help." And he dragged the crocodile back to where the wise man was.

Now the wise man and all the people there were greatly surprised, and they thanked the little Antelope again and again. "But," said he, "there is another thing that I want you to do tomorrow—I want you to bring me a big boa constrictor."

Again everyone laughed and said, "How is this little Antelope going to catch that big snake?"

But Antelope went away and found a big stick and some rope vine, and went out upon the grassy field to wait for the boa constrictor. When he heard the boa constrictor coming, Antelope ran to meet him, calling, "Good morning, Uncle Boa!" And they sat down together to eat and talk. When they were through eating, Antelope said to the boa constrictor, "Uncle Boa, Chief Digei says if anyone can be found longer than this stick, he will give him a fortune. I should like to see you get it—that's why I have come to you first. So I wish you would lie up against this stick, if you will, that I may measure you."

The boa constrictor didn't lose any time moving up close to the stick, and Antelope tied him to it—tightly. Since the boa constrictor couldn't see, himself, he asked, "Antelope, am I longer than the stick?"

"Um," said Antelope, "I think we'd better go to the wise man to discuss that." So away they went to the wise man, Antelope pulling the boa constrictor along behind him.

The wise man thanked Antelope once again, and added,

"There is just one thing left now. When you have done that, you will be all through."

"Tell me what that is," answered Antelope.

"I want you to go today and bring me all the little birds there are."

Antelope said he would. Now he went away and wove a huge cage, and carried it to the place where the chief of all the little birds lives. The chief received him kindly, and asked of him his errand.

"Chief," explained Antelope, "we have been arguing. People say that all of you little birds, even though you are so very many, still could not fill this cage."

As soon as the chief heard this, he called all the little birds from everywhere, and told them to fly into the cage. This they all did, and the chief himself flew in after them. *With a smile, Antelope fastened the door of the cage, and carried them all to the wise man.*

When the wise man saw him returning with his work done, he said, "Well done, Antelope, you have finished your studies. Already you are a wise man—even wiser than I. Keep on, always, doing just as you have done in these tasks I have given you. That's all you have to do always, for that is wisdom.

—Peter Luseini

THINK BEFORE SPEAKING

Long ago there was a very rich Chief named Kona, and this Chief had a very pretty daughter, whom he named Keema Kona. When she was seventeen years old, many



young men wanted to marry her, but she said she did not love them, and so it continued until she had grown older. One day her mother asked her, "Keema, when are you going to marry?"

She replied, "When the time comes."

Her mother said nothing about it again until a year had passed.

But from time to time Keema would tell her parents that the young men of that country were terribly ugly, so she didn't want to marry any of them. Now her father said to her, "My dear daughter, one should drink water without looking beneath it. The time has come for you to marry, therefore your mother and I want you to marry this year. You know well that we love you dearly, for you are the only child that we have, and all our possessions will be yours, so it is good for you to marry because we are growing old."

And the maiden consented to marry, though she said to her father, "But I have not yet seen anyone I would like for a husband, so make me this week two golden rings and have all the young men come to a meeting that I may look at them. Him who is the most handsome of all I will marry."

Her father had the rings made at once, and announced that all the young men and all the people of the country should come together. All the people clothed their sons in fine garments, and went to the meeting-place. The Chief's town was filled with people, and all were told to sit down out of doors beneath a large tree, that the Chief's daughter might look upon them for a while.

When the crocodiles had heard of all this, they clothed

one of their sons with many golden ornaments, and he went to the meeting, taking upon himself a new name—Kakpa. The Chief of the crocodiles had anointed him with oil, and said "Kakpa, become a handsome youth!" And behold! the young crocodile immediately became a youth. Kakpa came and entered the town, and at once his good looks were noticed by all. As the people were waiting for the Chief's daughter, Kakpa took a seat behind them. It was not long before music was heard, and the Chief's daughter came and looked upon all the people. Only a few minutes passed, and she cried, "Haha! my eyes have seen him,—this youth shall be my husband!"

The Chief beckoned the young man to him, and asked him his name.

"My name is Kakpa," the youth replied.

Thereupon the Chief said, "Kakpa, you are no longer a stranger here. From this day my town and all that I have belong to you and my daughter."

Some years afterwards Chief Kona was swimming in the river and it so happened that he drowned. Although his people looked for him, two days passed, and he was not found. Behold! he was in jail far beneath the water in the town of the crocodiles. His daughter wept bitterly, but Kakpa tried to comfort her, saying, "Do not weep: I will try something this evening—perhaps your father is not dead!" That evening Kakpa told his wife that he himself was a water man, and begged her to tell it to no one. She promised. "For you know," he added, "if you tell that I am a water man, I shall die." Again she promised never to speak of it to anyone. Now Kakpa sank down into the water, and before very long, appeared again, bringing

her father. Oh! how everyone shouted with joy to see him again, and how they danced!

One day while Kapka's wife and her family were sitting talking, Keema said without thinking, "My Kakpa is a water man." Before long the news had spread throughout the town. Kakpa came and looked long at his wife and said, "Keema Kona, if anyone should tell you to take care of yourself, remember—first you must cover your mouth."

And as Kakpa said these words, he died.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE PRINCE

Once upon a time there were two kings. One of them lived in the East, the other in the West. The Eastern king had a son who would not marry anybody except a girl who knew both the past and future. The Western monarch had a daughter who also refused to marry any man but he who knew the past and future. It so happened that this young man heard of that girl. He told his royal father that he wanted her as his wife. To this proposal the parent consented, and gave him a horse to ride in order to go and marry the princess, together with some men to guide him to the place. When he reached the village of the king in the West he laid his plan before His Majesty, who was pleased with it. And after a few days the splendid marriage was celebrated.

Then the young prince went to his father-in-law and told him that he desired to return to his own country. On the following day the newly wed pair bade farewell, and started on their journey. While they travelled, they met

a man who wore no hat. When he had gone along with them for a good distance, the prince said: "Will you change your head with mine?" The man replied: "Oh, prince, I am sure your father was right for saying you were crazy because you would not marry anybody save a girl who knows the past and future. Now how would it be possible for me to give you my head?" Again, after they had proceeded further, the royal son said to him: "Will you exchange your feet for mine?" This time the startled man did not even listen to him because he thought his questioner was completely out of his senses.

Having gone ahead a little longer, they saw two farms, one with a rich harvest of rice, the other being scanty and poor. Here they obtained something to eat. After they had eaten, the prince asked the man once more: "Of these two farms, which has more rice?" The man answered: "Didn't you see that the first one contained an abundance, or perhaps you scarcely took notice of it at all?"

When they arrived home, the royal father provided a great feast for his heir and heiress. He was very much pleased, too, with the princess. After the feast was over, she called to her the man her husband had questioned on the way. She said to him: "Do you really believe that my bridegroom was foolish to ask you about those things? Let me tell you what he had in mind. While we were on our travels, the sun was too hot, so he wanted to give you his hat. Therefore he asked to change your head with his. Again, he was riding and you were walking. So he asked you to change your feet for his. Thirdly, we came to a farm where plenty of rice could be seen, but there we got nothing to eat. The next one held little rice, but there

we were able to dine. Hence that one had more rice than the preceding farm from which we gathered nothing."

Then everyone who had heard her was delighted with the clever princess' answers; and admired her princely spouse, and the understanding she had already acquired of his ability and wisdom.

THE SNAKES TALK

Many years ago Friday was kept only by the Mohammedans as their chief holy day. But of course the heathen in some parts of Sierra Leone, West Africa, did not observe it. Yet beginning with the year 1926, they joined the Moslems or "Moli men" in keeping Fridays as their days of rest. The reason for this change is as follows:

In a certain town named Yandohun there lived an old chief called Yarjai who had a considerable farm. On Fridays naturally none of the sons of Mohammed went to work. Yarjai sent his son Tekawolo to work on his place. Once while engaged in cutting down some trees, lo and behold, in the first one he struck with his axe there appeared two big snakes who spoke to him. Not realizing that these strange voices came from the tree, he began to hurry along the road, thinking that somebody had followed him from the town. One snake cried out: "Don't go! We called you." Looking up, he saw the snakes. Again they addressed him: "Carry this message to Yarjai our son." Then his heart was filled with fear, and he commenced to tremble all over. But the reptiles threatened: "If you do not pass on these words properly you will die, though if you explain them correctly nothing will happen to you."

These fierce snakes turned out to be the ghosts of Yarjai's father and mother. They went on to say: "We died long ago, yet we still work for his good. And also he is to understand that we are the cause of his possessing many cows and more rice than any other person in this part of the country. It is we who have brought Yarjai this good fortune. From now on he himself must not work, but use his money for good deeds to his neighbors. As to this point he has been disobedient so far; and this is our last warning."

Quaking with terror, Tekawolo started off immediately toward Yandohun. When he reached it, the people were gathered playing games. By this time his fear had reached such a state that he could not control himself, and he fell headlong into their midst. When they saw him, the townsfolk grew angry, since they thought he wanted to distract them from their play. But this was not the case. He called out to his older brother: "Boima! Bring me two kola-nuts, for I have news for our father." Boima and the rest, however, refused to pay attention to him, and then Tekawolo was siezed with convulsions and nearly died. Hurriedly Boima ran and brought the kola-nuts and gave them to his younger brother, who by now was able to sit up and become quite calm once more. He explained fully everything which the serpents had told him.

In that very year—1926—the old man Yarjai obtained from his fields three huts full of rice out of the farm he owned. As this strange event had happened on a Friday, it was decided by the tribes to keep that day as "holy"—when henceforth no work was to be done.

—J. S. Konteh

WHY THE FLY BUZZES IN THE DOG'S EAR

Long years ago the animals did not live in the jungles and forests, but all of them were together in a large town of their very own. Each kind of beast and bird and reptile possessed an individual house. One alone had none. The poor dog had no house to himself. Of course he didn't mind this when the weather was nice and pleasant. But as the rainy season came along and everything was damp and cold and raw and generally disagreeable, he was decidedly unhappy.

During one of these bad seasons when the animals were gathered together to talk over their problems, the little dog finally plucked up every ounce of his courage and determination, and told them that he was going to build a home. He asked the rest to help him, and they kindly agreed to do so. Alas for short memories! Lo and behold, when the good weather came back again in the dry season of the year, since the dog did not need a house then, he proceeded to forget all about it. What he wanted to do now was just to run hither and yon and sleep and play in the open.

Again the next year when the rainy season rolled around once more, he informed the gathering of animals that he certainly and surely would build when the weather improved. But the same thing happened all over again when the next dry season did come. And so it went on for years and years. When the dog was wet, he waited for the rain to stop so he would be in a position to erect a fine dwelling; yet when he was dry it never occurred to him to build.

Naturally these delays and postponements exasperated all the animals, especially the fly. Nobody else was so

irritated and mad at the silly dog as this small but determined creature. And to this day, whenever a fly sees a dog, he buzzes and buzzes around his ears and asks: "When are you going to build that elegant house of yours?" This makes the dog angry, and he always tries to bite the fly.

WHY THE ELEPHANT FEARS THE GOAT

Once upon a time the largest and one of the smaller members of the animal kingdom were travelling together. The elephant and the goat apparently had become the best of friends and were much in each other's company. One day they came to the bank of a big river—too wide and deep for them to ford or swim, so they had to wait until the ferry-man in his great canoe could come to take them across. While they waited for him to appear they sat and talked upon a good-sized rock. The goat started to chew his cud. Not knowing what his partner was doing the elephant asked: "What are you chewing for? I don't see anything around here to eat." The goat replied: "Oh, yes there is! Don't you see that I am engaged in eating this rock bit by bit, bite by bite? And when I finish that off, then I'm going to begin eating you too!"

This dire threat scared the huge but timid beast completely out of his wits, and he ran away as fast as his legs could carry him. So the belief to this day is that the elephant fears the goat.